

THE DOWNTOWN COUNCIL BLUFFS PLAN

A Development Vision for a Unique Urban District



The previous chapters of the Downtown Council Bluffs Plan analyzed the demographics of the city and the surrounding market area, existing conditions, potential markets, and an extensive community participation process to define a new vision for downtown. Much has been accomplished in the central district during the past ten years. These features have included a renewed streetscape, a new public library, the reuse of the historic Carnegie Library as the Union Pacific Railroad Museum, the new Senior Center, the Fountain Square at the district's historic heart, and continued investment in the city's two hospital campuses. Perhaps equally important have been smaller, less heralded actions that, nevertheless taken together, become extremely significant. These include small business investment and a palpable *esprits d'corps* of property owners on the historic 100 block; restoration and housing reinvestment along Bluff Street and 8th Street; and the gradual, incremental improvement of individual buildings in the Haymarket District. The intention of this plan is to mold these major efforts into a unified vision for Council Bluffs' unusual central district – an area that has different facets and features that, like a kaleidoscope, gradually and subtly change in character. This vision establishes a destination for downtown – a set of goals that will unify a variety of past actions and identifies strategic

projects that can help the district continue to evolve as a residential, business, and public environment.

Downtown Council Bluffs was once a vital and teeming retail center, chronicled by historic photographs. With changing times, the city has also adapted, creating a district that, while different, remains highly desirable in terms of mix of uses, history, and human scale. We believe that Downtown can build on its ability to manage and direct change, restoring a sense of magic to the district and, as such, contributing strongly to the future and strategic position of the entire community.

CRITERIA FOR THE VISION

A comprehensive development vision for Downtown Council Bluffs is guided by eight criteria:

■ CONTINUE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE IMAGE CENTER FOR THE ENTIRE CITY.

Downtown remains the place where many of the city's signature features are clustered. These include Bayliss Park, the old and new library buildings, Haymarket, the centers of city and county government, and the steeples of its historic churches. The city's superb historic neighborhoods are in or

around the central district, and include the landmark General Dodge House. Recent projects such as the Fountain Square and the Downtown streetscape also help define the image of a new city center. Like the Loess Hills that frame it, Downtown is unique to Council Bluffs and its present and past images come to mind as people visualize the city.

■ MAINTAIN DOWNTOWN'S CENTRALITY TO THE LIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF COUNCIL BLUFFS' RESIDENTS.

Part of Downtown's uniqueness lies in its location at the junction of Council Bluff's residential neighborhoods – a geographical center for many of the city's residents. It also is the center of the city's public life, accommodating most government facilities as well as Bayliss Park, Council Bluffs' public square. But, in common with many other cities, other projects and market forces have reduced the importance of Downtown in daily life. Where Downtown once served as the undisputed retail and commercial center of the city, developments on the periphery of the city now dominate the retail market. Similarly, major event centers, including Iowa Western's Performing Arts Center and the Mid-America Center, are located on the edges of the community. Downtown is now but one of many activity centers, but must continue to build on its emotional and geographic centrality to the city. A successful Downtown Council Bluffs will give people reasons to come there, making it more important to their lives in the city. Downtown retains major assets, including the centers of civic life, major workplaces, historic importance, and adjacent regional medical centers. We should reinforce those features that already bring people here and create new features that increase the district's importance to the city's residents.

■ FOCUS ON STRATEGIC PROJECTS THAT BUILD ON PREVIOUS DEVELOPMENTS.

Through the last decade, planners and community leaders in Downtown have focused effectively on major items on the community agenda. The successful completion of these projects has built an effective base for future development. For example, community leaders rightly identified a new Downtown Public Library as a critical project in the late 1980s, and persisted until the project was completed. In addition to being an excellent library, the structure

became an instant landmark and created a climate that opened other opportunities in Downtown. The Downtown streetscape program is another strategic focus that sets forces in motion that advance development. This Downtown Plan should identify additional strategic focuses that pave the way for other individual decisions and investments that together generate a great central district.

■ LINK DOWNTOWN'S SUBDISTRICTS WHILE MAINTAINING THEIR INDIVIDUAL AND UNIQUE CHARACTER.

The Downtown Council Bluffs planning area is not a traditional central business district, but rather a central neighborhood composed of individual subdistricts. Ideally, these subdistricts fulfill distinct roles and blend into each other, like a color in the spectrum subtly grading into the next color. The public environment should link these subdistricts together, establishing common themes, providing an underlying unity for the entire district, and making it easier to move around Downtown. The streetscape program, most completely realized between Broadway and 9th Avenue along Main and Pearl Streets, establishes this linkage through the traditional core, Bayliss Park, Government Center, and Haymarket subdistricts. The linkages that have been established here should continue east along Broadway and to the primary entrances into Downtown.

■ CREATE NEW DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT AND FUTURE MARKET NEEDS

Market analysis indicates that Downtown provides moderate but significant support for new commercial and residential development. New development should take advantage of, but not overshoot, these markets. It is also important to recognize that markets that are currently not present may develop over time. For example, there is no sustainable market for multi-tenant office space at present, caused by softness in the metropolitan office market and extensive office space opened by the contraction of Acceptance Insurance in the local market. Yet, these conditions are likely to be temporary. New office buildings will be built in the region during the next two decades, and Downtown Council Bluffs should be positioned to take advantage of these markets as they emerge by reserving quality sites.



■ BUILD ON THE UNIQUE STRENGTHS OF DOWNTOWN.

Downtown Council Bluffs has special strengths that it can use to define a “brand” – the set of unifying themes and expectations that people associate with the district. These assets are:

- *Historic character and attractions.* From the steeples of the landmark Saint Peters and Broadway Methodist churches and the Victorian Mansions of 8th Street and Bluff Street to the history of the Mormons’ Kaneshville settlement, Downtown Council Bluffs is rich in history and meaning.
- *Bayliss Park.* Bayliss Park is a unique urban open space in the metropolitan area, a classical town square surrounded by an historic cityscape that provides scale and enclosure. The result is a special image feature that hosts weddings, art shows, community events, and, most recently, a memorial for the city’s war veterans.
- *Indian Creek.* Ironically, this waterway whose course helped determine the location of Downtown is submerged through much of the district, buried below concrete creektops or under the Omni Business Center parking garage. Yet, even in its apparent absence, the creek both defines part of the district’s character, while its floodplain, encompassing part of the district, creates significant development limitations.
- *The district’s civic importance.* Bayliss Park, City Hall, the Pottawattamie County complex, the Public Library, and the Union Pacific Railroad

Museum all make Downtown important as a center for public life.

- *Views and the surrounding landscape.* Downtown’s irregular grid, nestled at the base of the surrounding Loess Hills, has some of the quality and intimacy of a New England town center. Changing vistas of the landmark church steeples and the near and long views of the surrounding bluffs give the district some of its distinctiveness.

The Downtown vision must take best advantage of these distinctive resources by respecting, educating, and preserving the city’s built and natural environment.

■ INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING DOWNTOWN.

Downtown Council Bluffs both includes residential areas and is surrounded by them. In many ways, it is a neighborhood in scale and services, and, as such, provides an excellent opportunity for residential development. Buildings like Regal Towers already have a large senior population, reinforced by the construction of the superb new Senior Center. The Center, in turn, opens new redevelopment opportunities that can be anchored by additional senior living. Downtown also features a variety of conveniences, including nearby regional shopping, a range of recreational opportunities, and easy access to major job centers. Excellent and innovative residential settings can attract a significant market, and should be a central part of the downtown development strategy. These settings should also incorporate quality urban open spaces to address people’s demand for recreation and green space.

■ REINFORCE DOWNTOWN’S ABILITY TO OFFER SERVICES TO NEIGHBORHOODS.

Just as Downtown will act as a neighborhood in its own right, so does it also have a strong relationship to surrounding neighborhoods. A strong Downtown stabilizes the value of surrounding residential district. In addition, a major commercial role for Downtown Council Bluffs is as a provider of commercial services to surrounding neighborhoods. Surrounding neighborhoods generate a market niche for Downtown, which in turn increases their value by continuing to improve.

INGREDIENTS OF DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

As we begin to develop a vision for Downtown, it is important to summarize the “ingredients” of the Downtown mix – the results of the market analysis and a review of significant community projects and priorities that affect Downtown. These help us identify the variables and potentials that should be integrated into the Downtown plan.

MARKET CONCLUSIONS

The findings of our market analysis are discussed in detail in Chapter Four. For the sake of immediacy in helping us develop the Downtown vision, we summarize these findings here for each of three key areas: retail, housing, and office.

Retail Markets

- *Council Bluffs has restored its role as a regional retail center.* This is a highly positive development. In 1980, per capita retail sales were only 72% of the statewide per capita average, a disastrously negative “balance of trade” for a large Iowa city. Since then, the city’s “pull factor” (an index developed by Dr. Kenneth Stone of Iowa State University that represents the ratio per capita retail sales in a city or county to per capita statewide retail sales) has generally increased by over 80%. This makes Council Bluffs one of the state’s fastest growing major retail markets.
- *This growth is the result of development of major new retail projects along the Interstate corridors.* As Downtown went into retail eclipse, Council Bluff’s share of regional retailing fell dramatically. New projects, notably the Mall of the Bluffs in the late 1980s and the Manawa Power Center in the late 1990s, restored the city’s retail role. While this retail growth has bypassed Downtown, it is still relatively close to the central district and has direct street connections via Madison Avenue and the South Expressway. From the perspective of residential and spin-off commercial markets, these near connections can be extremely attractive.
- *Downtown Council Bluffs can support up to 100,000 square feet of additional retail*

development during the next five years. The market analysis projects an annual potential retail market of about \$30 million. It projects local support for a medium-sized grocery store in the range of about 40,000 square feet, which can be expanded to an industry-standard facility in the range of 60,000 square feet by attracting an expanded market base. These calculations do not include the possible draw of a major grocery from parts of the Omaha market, including downtown residents. The market analysis also projects support for about 30,000 to 35,000 square feet in specialty retailing and neighborhood services.

- *Additional housing development can further expand retail demand.* Increases in the number living in and around Downtown will also increase the neighborhood commercial potential. Based on the methodology presented in this plan, each addition of 100 households creates a demand for about 1,500 square feet of retail space.

Housing

- *Council Bluffs has a potential 20-year growth demand for about 4,900 housing units. Based on construction trends of the last decade, about 55% of this demand is for one and two-family housing and 45% for multi-family housing.*
- *The downtown area can capture a share of this housing demand.* Downtown can realistically and conservatively capture 25% of the city’s rental market, given appropriate settings and opportunities. This produces an estimated demand for about 28 units annually. In addition, Omaha has experienced a minimum annual demand for about 100 to 120 units of downtown housing during the last twenty years. A capture rate of about 10% of this metropolitan demand in Downtown Council Bluffs produces an additional demand for 10 to 12 units.
- *Based on these assumptions, Downtown generates an annual housing demand for up to 40 multi-family units.* Special projects that accommodate individual market segments, such as senior housing related to the Senior Center, can increase this demand. In addition, Downtown housing development can establish trends by

producing unique environments. Finally, Downtown may capture a portion of the annual demand for one- and two-family units by providing equity housing settings through condominium development.

Office

- *At present, no demand exists in Downtown Council Bluffs for substantial new office development.* The construction of new facilities in Downtown Omaha for First National Bank and the Union Pacific Railroad will produce up to two million square feet of Class A, B, and below office space. This space will probably be offered at very attractive rates in an attempt to reduce vacancy. In addition, Acceptance Insurance occupies over 300,000 square feet of office space in Downtown Council Bluffs, and is the primary occupant of Omni Business Center. The probable contraction of Acceptance will produce a large amount of vacant space in the district, which is likely to be attractively priced. The recent relocation of Heartland Properties to the former Redlands Building is a positive development, because Heartland's home is attractive to a variety of potential users. However, without a large new downtown occupant of take vacated space, there is currently no market support for new multi-tenant office space in Downtown Council Bluffs.
- *New office space will continue to be needed in small increments.* Despite a lack of demand for major office development, individual occupants will continue to produce a need for new offices. The recent growth of small offices in the Haymarket area, typically including attorneys, title companies, and other uses associated with the legal system and county government, reflects this need. While difficult to quantify, we expect this trend to continue, producing a moderate demand for small offices in individual, often owner-occupied, buildings.

PROJECTS ON THE COMMUNITY AGENDA

Council Bluffs' public and private sectors had a long agenda for Downtown as the city entered the 1990s, based on a decade of relative decline. Many of the action items of that agenda have been completed, making the decade one of major transformation in the history of the central district. These items include:

- **The Council Bluffs Public Library.** Unsuccessful attempts at financing a new downtown library made this needed project a symbol of frustration among community leaders. The *Vision of Community Plan*, completed in 1991 as a strategic plan for the city's future, identified this project as a critical priority for the city. The project's completion, on a full block site between 1st and Willow Avenues between 4th and Main Street, has been a source of great community momentum, and has grown into a significant downtown activity center.
- **Omni Business Center.** In 1990, Midlands Mall, the regional shopping center developed to restore downtown's role as a major retail center, was virtually empty and its future in doubt. The presence of a largely vacant, relatively impermeable building on a very large site in the city center was a major void in the downtown environment. Since then, Midlands Mall has been reborn as Omni Business Center, converted to an office facility providing affordable office spaces in a variety of configurations. The Omni Center



also provides a small amount of supporting commercial space and maintains a small multi-screen movie theater. The building achieved relatively high occupancy by 2000. Unfortunately, the likely contraction of Acceptance Insurance, the Omni Center's largest tenant, will leave a significant amount of vacant space in the building.

- The Downtown Streetscape.** While Downtown Council Bluffs featured Bayliss Park, one of the metropolitan area's finest urban spaces, the rest of its public environment was unattractive and neglected. To respond to this need, the City, with the critical financial help of the Iowa West Foundation, embarked on a downtown streetscape program. This program, initiated during the late 1990s, included new sidewalks with accent brick and ceramics, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and street furniture; lights and furniture were painted in a distinctive powder blue color. The streetscape program began along Main and Pearl Streets between Broadway and Willow Avenue, and along Willow Avenue between 4th and 6th Streets (including Bayliss Park). Subsequent extensions included West Broadway from Main to 7th Street and, most recently, Main and Pearl through Haymarket south to 8th Avenue. At the Main and Broadway intersection, a vacant bank building was demolished and replaced by the new Fountain Square entrance.
- The Bennett Building.** This building at 4th and Broadway, the tallest historic office building in Council Bluffs, was largely vacant in 1990. Since then, it has been redeveloped for street level commercial and upper level apartments by NuStyle Development of Omaha, the metropolitan

area's most prolific developer of historic properties.

- The Historic Carnegie Library.** The disposition of the historic library, at Pearl and Main on the south face of Bayliss Park, has been a source of controversy. In 2003, the building reopened as the Union Pacific Railroad Museum, relocated from its former, somewhat limited home on the ground floor of the Union Pacific headquarters building in Omaha.
- The Senior Center.** In the early 1990s, the city began to consider the idea of a major senior center to serve the cluster of older adults living in the central district and the community at large. The preferred option was the redevelopment of a deteriorated site on the west side of Main Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. The site was acquired and prepared by the city using CDBG and EDI funding. The Center, completed in 2000 and again assisted by financing from the Iowa West Foundation, is a superb project that provides a variety of social, arts, and fitness facilities and programs to the community.

This record of achievement during the 1990s reversed the downward trends of Downtown Council Bluffs and completed many of the district's unresolved projects. Current pending efforts and projects in Downtown include:

- Streetscape Continuation.** Construction of the streetscape through the Haymarket district in 2003 completes most of the north-south corridor along Main and Pearl Streets. Extension of the streetscape east to 2nd Street along West Broadway is scheduled for 2004-2005, with



eastward extension to Frank Street (including the 100 Block) programmed in later years. However, the character and design of this streetscape is currently unresolved and is a subject for this plan.

- **South Haymarket Redevelopment.** The City and Pottawattamie County Development Corporation (PCDC) have proposed redevelopment concepts for the south part of Haymarket and for the South Main corridor beyond 9th Avenue. The most deteriorated conditions in the Haymarket area are found south of the Senior Center between Main and 6th Street from 8th to 9th Avenue; and on the east side of Main from Worth Street south. The redevelopment concept proposes senior housing associated with the senior center on the former site; the latter site includes a former gas station site with subsurface contamination, and several deteriorated commercial buildings.
- **The Federal Courthouse/Post Office Block.** The current Federal Building at 6th and West Broadway provides inconvenient customer access to the Post Office and inadequate parking. The Chamber of Commerce developed an alternate plan for the site, with new quarters for the retail post office and additional parking, and presented these plans to the General Services Administration (GSA). In 2003, PCDC is working with the GSA to complete a feasibility study for a new Federal Courthouse.
- **County Government Campus.** Overall district parking is roughly in balance with need; however, parking adjacent to the County Courthouse is relatively inadequate, causing workers to park in relatively remote locations. Pottawattamie County

has considered possible parking garage construction south of the main Courthouse.

- **Indian Creek Floodplain.** Much of the east-west downtown corridor is officially located in the floodplain of Indian Creek. Because of the restrictions that floodplain designation places on development, the city has studied measures necessary to remove this designation. Some have considered the possibility of a major reservoir or water feature along the creek from 2nd Street to Frank Street, through the “100 Block” and “East Corridor” subdistricts. However, a facility would have to be much larger than possible on this site; and would have to be located farther upstream to have a meaningful impact on floodplain boundaries.
- **Redevelopment in the Mynster Street Area.** Some of Council Bluffs’ worst housing conditions occur in the small district along Mynster Street, between 6th and 8th Streets from Kanessville Boulevard to Washington Avenue. Some of this land has been purchased and cleared by First Christian Church as part of a possible expansion program. The redevelopment of this blighted area has been a long-term goal of the city, and recent efforts to assemble a site for a neighborhood commercial center have focused around 8th and Broadway.

THE “PROGRAM” FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

When designing a building, we begin with a “program” document, identifying the fixed requirements for spaces and the functional relationships among those



spaces. Similarly, in thinking about a downtown vision, we should establish a basic program of facilities and needs, derived from considering current projects and market potentials. This program – the ingredients for Downtown development – includes the following:

1. *A significant new retail component.* Market demands can support a significant expansion of Downtown's retail space. The principal markets are related to serving adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods in the primary and secondary retail trade areas, and include support for a grocery store. In addition, Downtown offers support for specialty retailing and hospitality uses such as additional eating and drinking enterprises. This translates to a five-year potential demand for about 100,000 square feet of additional retail space. While this demand is encouraging, and can reinforce existing retailing in the city center, we believe that several retail directions seem tempting but offer little long-term potential. These include:

- *Attempting to develop Haymarket along the lines of Omaha's Old Market.* Haymarket has developed nicely during the last ten years with offices related to city and county government. The Senior Center at 7th Avenue and Main also adds a potential anchor for new, senior-oriented development. This environment can support some additional eating places and limited specialty retailing and office services. However, despite Haymarket's historic character and human-scaled streets and buildings, it is too close to Omaha's Old Market to compete with the large signature district.

- *Attempting to compete with major centers for general retailing.* The economic strength of Mall of the Bluffs and the Manawa Power Center are assets for potential downtown residents, but make direct competition for general retail dollars impossibly difficult. Downtown's primary retail markets will be neighborhood retail and services, office and employee services, specialty and destination retailing, and restaurants and lounges. Nevertheless, this is an extensive enough retail base to support significant growth.

2. *Substantial housing development providing for annual production of about 35-40 units of rental housing, along with some potential for equity housing.* Residential development should be a significant part of the Downtown picture, taking advantage of the scale and attractive physical environment offered by the district and the existing neighborhood character of many of its parts. Downtown Council Bluffs offers many regional assets as well – direct access only five to ten minutes from regional shopping, the Missouri Riverfront, and Downtown Omaha; potential linkages to the regional trail system; and easy access to a variety of recreational attractions. Downtown living in Council Bluffs is a highly marketable product.
3. *Reservation of future prestige office development sites.* The state of the economy in 2003 and the surplus of office space in both Downtown Council Bluffs and throughout the metropolitan area mean that there is no market for substantial new office space. However, office uses remain important, and as-built contemporary buildings (such as 25 and 35 Main and the AmAg Building) and converted facilities (such as Omni Business Center) establishes a foundation for additional new development. A strategic location for prestige new office development is the traditional West Broadway "core," between Main and 6th Streets from West Broadway to Kanessville Boulevard. Much of this area is owned by public entities, including the City and Council Bluffs Community Schools, or by the Chamber of Commerce. This site should gradually be assembled as opportunities present themselves for future development. Small projects that provide short-term or expedient development, but eliminate the possibility of major future construction, should be avoided.
4. *Continued growth and small-scale enhancement in the Haymarket District.* The small-scale office reuse and redevelopment that has slowly but surely strengthened Haymarket should continue, with redevelopment actions assembling small sites and improving parking and circulation. The Senior Center should encourage new senior housing on an adjacent site.



5. *Redevelopment of the 100 Block of West Broadway and surrounding areas.* The historic 100 Block, recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a key development focus and is flanked by relatively deteriorated sites – the Vine Street residential block to the north and the Broadway to Pierce Street block to the south. Building rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, combined with redevelopment, provides Downtown with a major opportunity for transformational development – a series of projects that can strongly affect the image and perception of the Downtown district.
6. *Linkage among the parts of Downtown.* Connecting and unifying the individual components of Downtown can help these subdistricts reinforce one another, and establish unified themes for the district. This strategy can also integrate the medical facilities on the east with the central district's other features. Two opportunities for linkages exist – the street environment and the Indian Creek corridor. Council Bluffs' effective streetscape program is one strategy to provide visual and functional linkages. However, the relatively unfriendly pedestrian environment along Broadway east of 2nd Street requires attention.
7. *Interpretive historical features and attractions.* History is critical to Council Bluffs and is part of the city's "brand." A part of the development program for Downtown should be capitalizing on historic buildings and features in the central district and surrounding areas. These features can increase local awareness of history and create features that attract visitors.
8. *Close cooperation between the city and neighborhoods surrounding Downtown.* Downtown Council Bluffs is surrounded by quality urban neighborhoods, including the historic bluff neighborhoods south and east of the central district, and fine residential neighborhoods north of Kanesville Boulevard. These areas are vitally interested in the future of Downtown; and, conversely, downtown re-investment depends on the continued quality of these residential areas. The city should maintain close communication and partnerships with residents and neighborhood associations in these areas to address zoning issues, deterioration or poor maintenance of some buildings, site conditions, and traffic issues.
9. *Good design standards in routine public improvement projects.* The city continues to make routine investments in public facilities and improvements. As these are done, they should reinforce other major projects and initiatives in the district by maintaining good design standards, placing utilities underground, and upgrading the visual appearance of the area.

THE DOWNTOWN VISION

The vision for Downtown Council Bluffs is derived by combining the **criteria** established above with the **program** based on markets and existing projects and needs. We can describe the vision by concentrating on three basic areas:

Subdistricts, describing the component districts of Council Bluffs' central district. As we have described earlier, Downtown Council Bluffs is more a "federation" of small areas with their own personalities than a traditional central business district. As such, Downtown policy should respect the individual needs and opportunities created by these districts, while assuring that they remain connected to and reinforcing of one another. Council Bluffs' central district will be an assemblage of these subdistricts, that subtly grade into one another. Taking advantage of the qualities of these subdistricts creates energy that pervades the entire downtown district.

Connections, the linkages between the subdistricts and other points of importance. The Connections provide structure for development and represent the main ways that people move through downtown. They also have a processional quality, and represent Downtown's most important public spaces.

Policies, describing in more detail methods by which various needs and markets are met and projects are implemented.

SUBDISTRICTS

The Downtown vision concentrates on nine subdistricts:

- **City Center**
- **100 Block**
- **East Corridor**
- **Bayliss Park**
- **Government Center**
- **Haymarket**
- **West Residential Neighborhood**
- **Bluff Street**
- **Kanesville North/ Mynster Street**

These subdistricts in some cases overlap because of their adjacency and reinforcing characteristics.

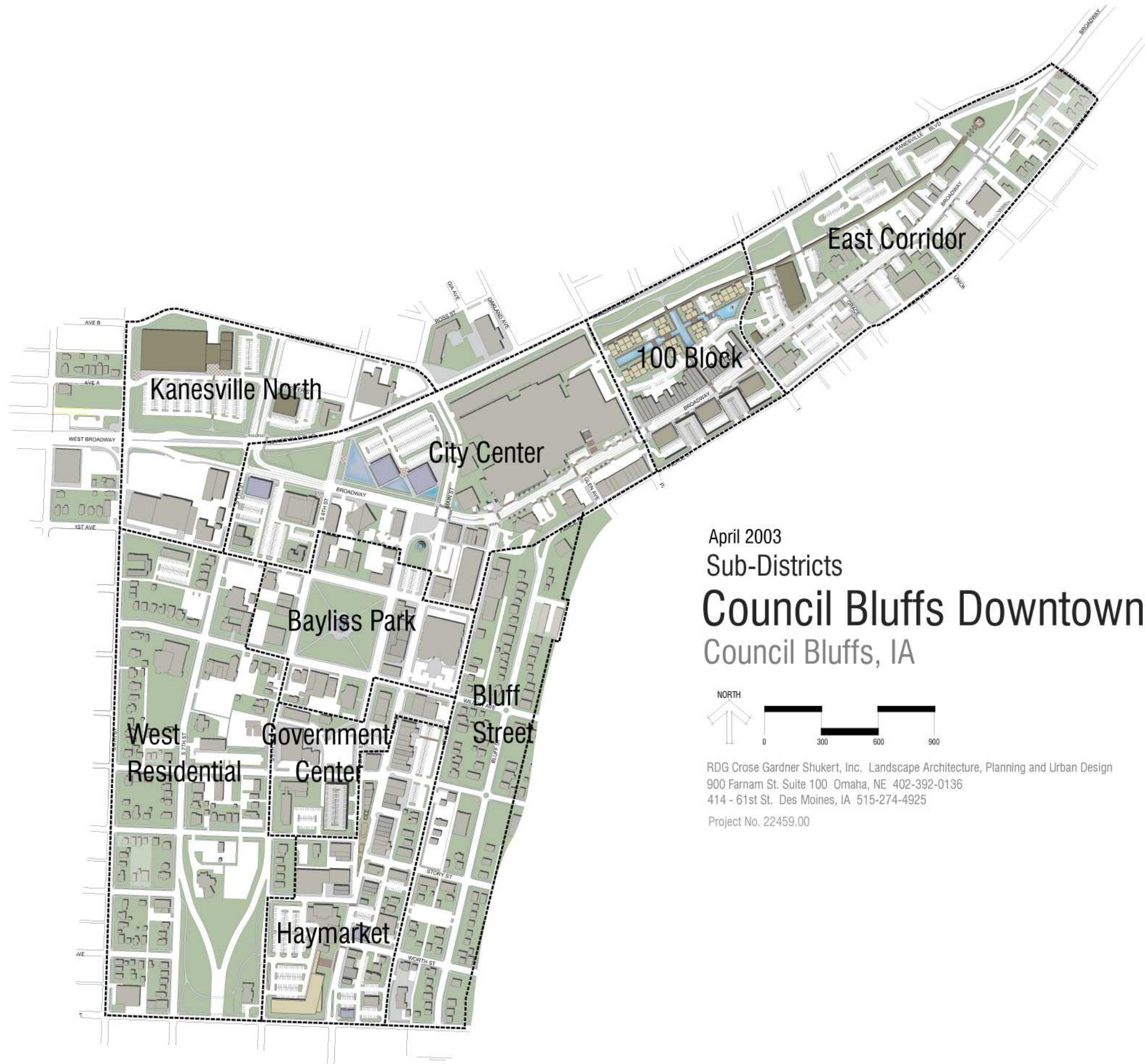
THE CITY CENTER

The City Center subdistrict includes the Broadway corridor from 2nd to 8th Streets. Major priorities in this area include:

- *Bridging the barrier created by the relatively harsh pedestrian environment along Omni Business Center on the north side of Broadway.* This environment weakens the link between West Broadway and the Bayliss Park areas and the 100 Block. Its solution specifically speaks to the unification of the central district.
- *Developing a reuse program for the entrance triangle between Main and 6th Street from Broadway to Kanesville.* These strategically located blocks are severely underused, with a majority of the site in open space or surplus municipal parking. This area, once the center of the retail Downtown, has declined following the closure of major retailers and demolition of buildings.
- *Strengthening the Main Street entrance to Downtown between Kanesville Boulevard and Broadway.* This connection is currently difficult to see from Kanesville Boulevard, the key entrance into the city from Interstate 80. As a result, visitors frequently bypass Downtown, and must reverse direction to get back into the district.

Based on these issues, we propose the following development program for the City Center subdistrict:

- *Streetscape redesign on West Broadway between Main and 2nd Street.* This project is designed to link the 100 Block and East Corridor with the southern and western parts of the central district. The streetscape program for this block focuses on the Omni Business Center block and includes:
 - Narrowing West Broadway to a three-lane section through this block. The proposed section transitions from four lanes to three lanes. This permits increasing the area between the curb and building line, providing the space necessary to implement a streetscape concept.
 - On the Omni Business Center block, providing a continuous and clearly defined eight-foot wide sidewalk, set back from moving traffic by a

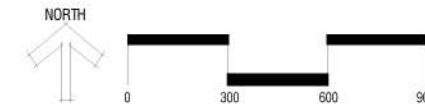


April 2003

Sub-Districts

Council Bluffs Downtown

Council Bluffs, IA



RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc. Landscape Architecture, Planning and Urban Design

900 Farnam St. Suite 100 Omaha, NE 402-392-0136

414 - 61st St. Des Moines, IA 515-274-4925

Project No. 22459.00



Omni Center today.



Omni Center Streetscape.

Street landscaping, crossing nodes, graphics, interpretive columns, and other features unify the downtown streetscape.

greenway strip. The sidewalk would also be separated from the building wall of the Omni Center. Landscaping would be provided on either side of the sidewalk. The “floating” of the sidewalk reflects the suburban scale of the structure and provides the pedestrian with the experience of walking through a linear park. Pedestrian movement along the block is now compromised by small parking lots between the sidewalk and the building. The streetscape concept retains this parking but organizes it perpendicular to the street, minimizing interruptions to the pedestrian path. The main entrance to the Omni Center, now interrupted by a parking drive, would be reconnected to the sidewalk. We also propose an improved mid-block bus stop, connected by a crosswalk to the other side of the street.

- On the south side of the street, providing a similar eight-foot sidewalk section, again separated from the curb by a greenway setback.
- Using patterned concrete or contrasting paving along the throats of driveways, maintaining the visual continuity of the sidewalk along Broadway.
- Punctuating the streetscape with street furniture and historical interpretation. Circular “nodes” along the sidewalk, paved in a contrasting surface, would provide seating areas off the sidewalk, surrounding by plantings. Each seating node would include a vertical interpretive pylon, describing the businesses and buildings that once lined Broadway, while celebrating the changes that the street has seen. A similar pattern of interpretive features has been used along the Embarcadero Boulevard in San Francisco, literally making that street into a progressive museum.

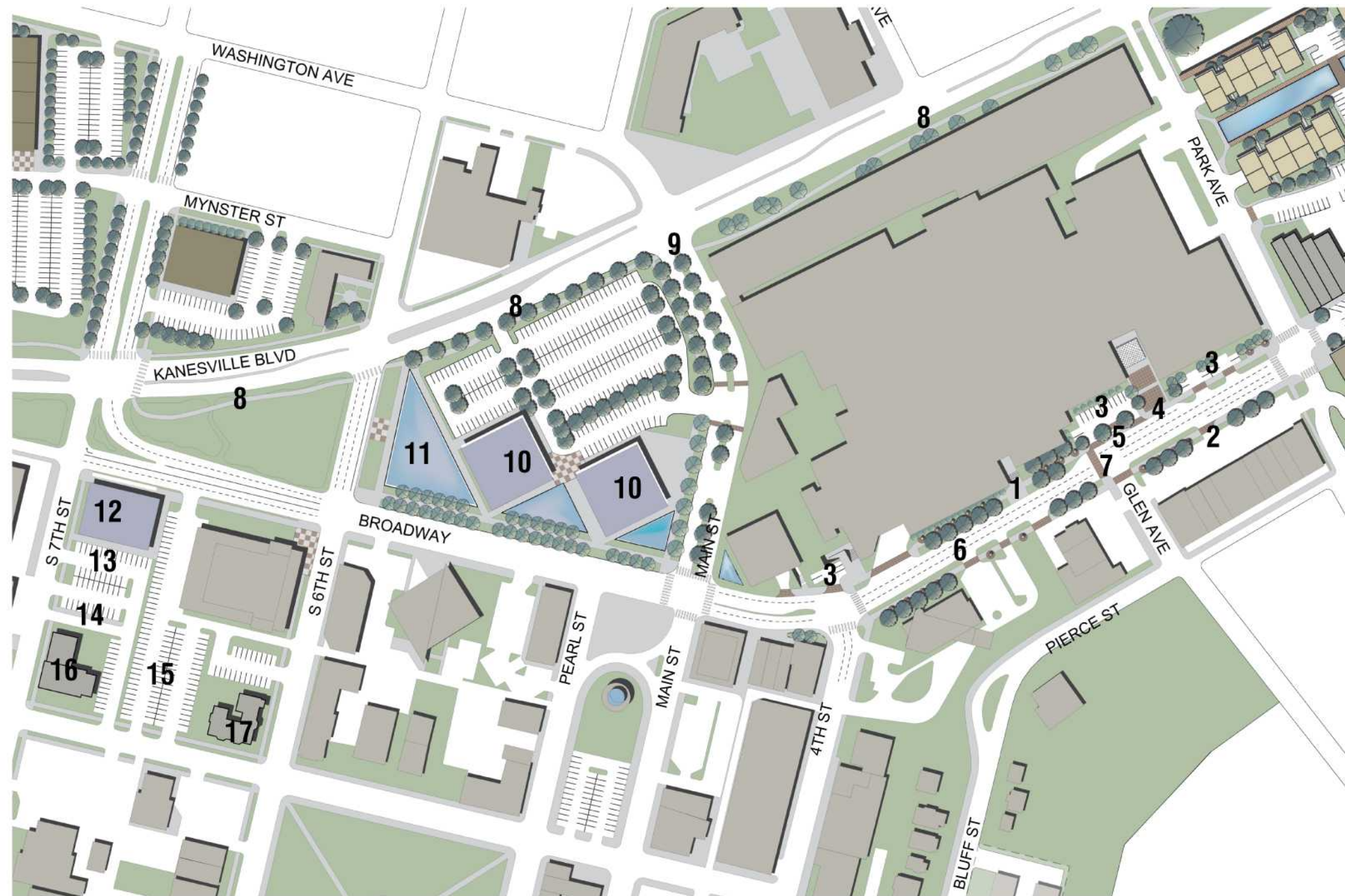


- Providing roadway lighting along Broadway, similar to that installed along Broadway west of Main Street. The thematic lights that line Main and Pearl Streets would be used in the seating nodes, providing continuity for that pattern. We would recommend using a more traditional color scheme on lights in this area, complementing the powder blue used elsewhere.

- *Redevelopment of the Triangle site.* This site between Kaneshville Boulevard, Broadway, Main, and 6th Street, is a highly visible, but underutilized parcel. The plan calls for long-term development of the site as a prestige office location. We anticipate two 2- to 3-story office buildings along Broadway, with footprints of about 15,000 square feet. The buildings would be rotated 45 degrees to Broadway, reflecting the geometry of the Heartland Properties and 25 Main Buildings, the district’s two largest contemporary office buildings. Surface parking would be provided to the north, with primary access from Main Street. A major water feature is proposed for the western edge of the site, creating a major arrival point for the district. Other water pools or fountains, playing off the triangle geometry, are located in the forecourts of the office buildings.

The Triangle is a high value development site for Council Bluffs, and its logical use is for quality office development. However, there is no market for this kind of development at present. Because of the site’s visibility and access, parts of it will be attractive to such businesses as fast food restaurants and convenience stores. Indeed, the building that now houses the Council Bluffs Area Chamber of Commerce was originally a fast food restaurant. Such development, while tempting, will prevent the site from reaching its full potential



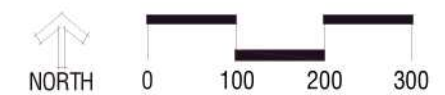


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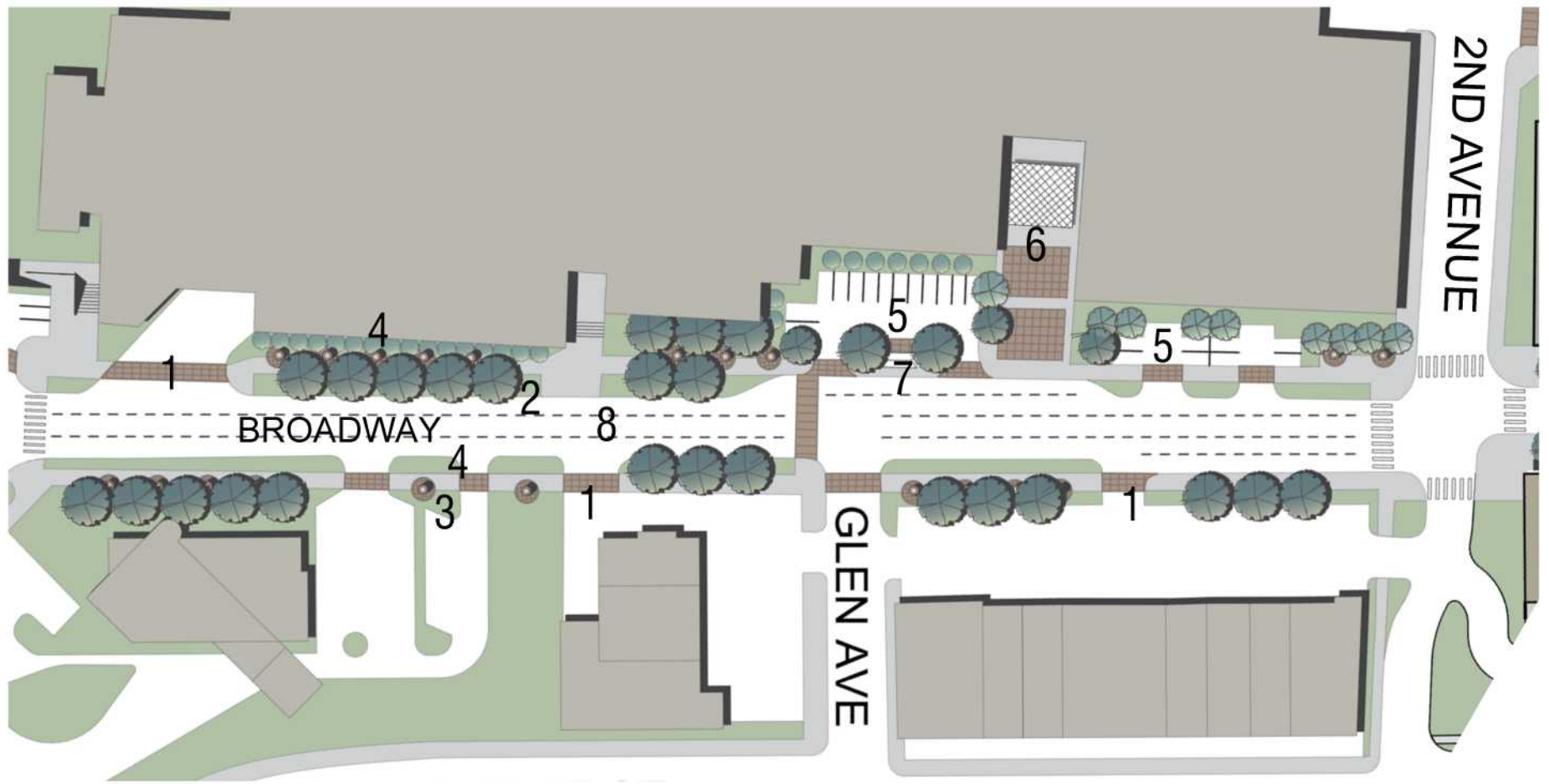
City Center

Council Bluffs Downtown

- 1 Omni Business Center Streetscape
- 2 Southside Streetscape
- 3 Redesigned Parking Areas
- 4 Omni Entrance
- 5 Bus Turnout
- 6 3-Lane Broadway Section
- 7 Pedestrian Walk
- 8 Valley View - Indian Creek Trail Connector
- 9 Main Street Boulevarding
- 10 New Office Buildings
- 11 Gateway Water Feature
- 12 Possible New Retail Post Office
- 13 Parking
- 14 Mailbox Drive-through
- 15 Expanded Federal Building Parking
- 16 Old YMCA Rehabilitation
- 17 Schugart Building Rehabilitation



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City Center

Omni Business Center Streetscape

Council Bluffs Downtown

- 1 Patterned Crosswalk
- 2 Landscaped Setback
- 3 Interpretative Seating Nodes
- 4 Pylon
- 5 Reconfigured Parking
- 6 Omni Business Center Entrance
- 7 Bus Turnout and Waiting Area
- 8 3-Lane Broadway Section



Triangle Site today



Redevelopment of the Triangle site. The plan calls for long-term development of the site as a prestige office location.

and should be discouraged. On the Triangle, patience will prove to be a virtue.

Triangle redevelopment could take a number of different courses and may proceed incrementally. For example, the former First National Bank Building on the northwest corner of Broadway and Main could be rehabilitated as an office building. Other stable occupants of the block, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Council Bluffs Community Schools, are likely to remain in place for some time. These buildings may change the eventual design, but not the ultimate role, of this key gateway site.

- *Boulevarding Main Street between Kaneshville Boulevard and Broadway and creating a strong entrance at Kaneshville and Main.* A strong entrance feature with clear directional information would be established at Main and Kaneshville Boulevard, directing Downtown-bound traffic to the south. The redevelopment of the Triangle should provide adequate right-of-way for a landscaped and divided Main Street connecting Broadway and Kaneshville along the west side of the Omni Business Center parking garage and the 25 and 35 Main office buildings. The boulevard should be adequately wide to provide bicycle lanes, connecting the Kaneshville Bicycle Trail to the center of Downtown. The boulevard and entrance feature should include lighting and streetscape features consistent with the Fountain Square and other parts of the completed downtown streetscape.
- *Redevelopment and reconfiguration of the Federal Courthouse/Post Office block.* This block, bounded by Broadway, 1st Avenue, 6th, and 7th Streets, connects the Broadway corridor with Bayliss Park, and has been the subject of previous attention by the city and Chamber of Commerce. The retail Post Office fronts along 6th Street, a northbound one-way street; this location functions poorly because of an awkward circulation pattern and inadequate customer parking. The 1st Avenue frontage also includes two historically significant buildings – the National Register-listed original YMCA at 1st Avenue and 7th Street; and the Schugart Apartments at 1st Avenue and 6th Street. Both buildings also suffer from lack of parking.

It is important to retain both a Post Office and the Federal Courthouse in Downtown. However, the retail Post Office need not be located in the same building. Various concepts have been presented over time to redesign this block, or to develop a new Federal Building on another, more commodious site. This plan proposes a concept that maintains the existing Federal Building while providing a better site for the retail Post Office function, rationalizing parking, and preserving as many historically significant structures as possible on the block. Its components include:

- Acquiring and demolishing the former Barn'd's fast food restaurant, available for sale and most recently used for professional offices. The building is now in relatively poor condition.
- Acquiring the now unused Mid-America Energy utility building off the alley.
- Building a building that accommodates a new retail Post Office on the Barn'd's site at 7th and Broadway. Parking would be provided south of the new building with access from both 7th Street and 1st Avenue. The site concept also provides an off-street mailbox drop with access from 7th Street. A new retail Post Office may be a tenant in a privately developed building. The Postal Service's distribution facility would remain in the existing Federal Building.
- Developing an improved parking lot between the old YMCA and Schugart Buildings, with parking dedicated to the Federal Building.
- Rehabilitating the historic YMCA and Schugart Buildings for housing. New tenant parking would be provided east of the YMCA and north of the Schugart Apartments. A joint-use parking arrangement between the Schugart and Federal Buildings could preserve a smaller, historic residential building on 6th Street. If site considerations and demands make retention of both buildings impossible, retaining the former YMCA, listed on the National Register, would take priority over the Schugart Building. Another variation might be retention of both the YMCA and a smaller historic structure just south of the existing Courthouse.



THE 100 BLOCK

The 100 Block on West Broadway incorporates the area between Pierce Street and Kanessville Boulevard from 1st to 2nd Streets, and is adjacent to the east of Omni Business Center. It is centered on the historic block on the north side of Broadway, recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and consists of three “layers” – the Vine Street residential block between the north Broadway alley and the Indian Creek channel; the historic Broadway block; and a series of older, but mostly non-historic commercial buildings on the block between Broadway and Pierce.

This block is both the last vestige of the traditional Broadway retail district and a major opportunity area for new development. It also is at the crossroads at two of the routes that link the city’s central district to the Interstate system – 1st Street, leading to Mall of the Bluffs at the Madison Avenue interchange; and Kanessville Boulevard, leading to Iowa Western Community College and the US 6 interchange. The block should be a major focus for redevelopment and can become a vital and unique anchor for the east side of the central district.

This plan envisions major redevelopment of the 100 Block and includes the following components:

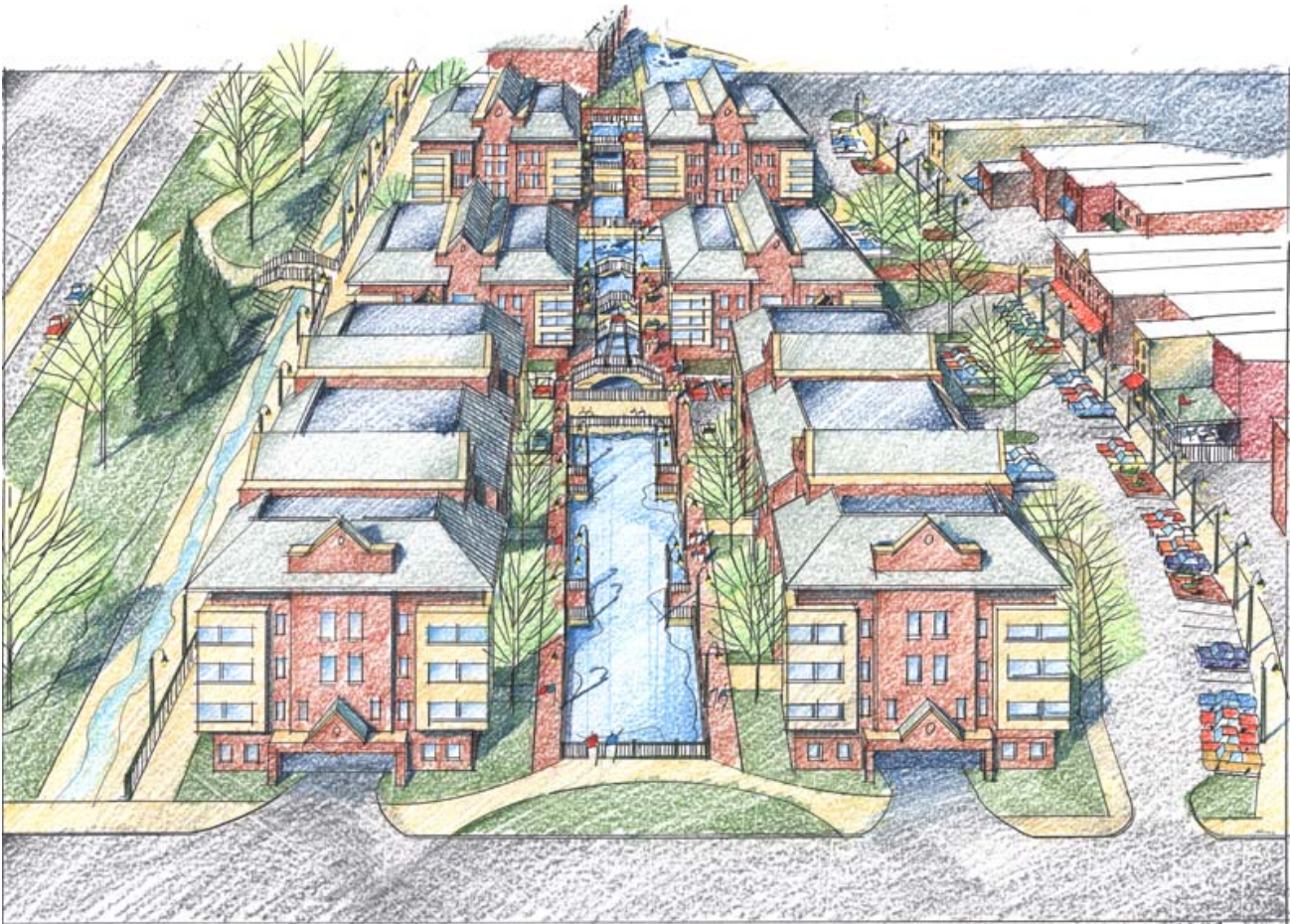
- *Continued rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the historic 100 Block.* The historic block forms the nucleus for new development to the north and south. A program should encourage rehabilitation of buildings consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation and, when feasible, the removal of “modern” facades and restoration of historic storefronts.

Comprehensive redevelopment in the area will also expose the rear facades of the block’s commercial buildings. Therefore, a rehabilitation effort should address both front and rear facades. A particularly high priority is the landmark 1892 Building, the historic street’s largest façade and an anchor in the center of the block.

- *Redevelopment of the Vine Street block with a new project featuring “canal apartments.”* This site now includes 21 single-family houses on small lots, and two multi-family buildings – an L-shaped brick structure in a townhome configuration on the south side of Vine, and a 1960s-vintage strip apartment building east of the curve on 1st Street. The parcel also includes a 71-stall municipal parking lot that receives only light use. A walkway connects this lot to the Broadway frontage. The Vine Street block is bordered by the Indian Creek channel, a deep culvert surfaced with a concrete creektop. Retaining walls and banks in various states of repair establish the south edge of the channel, while a landscaped area gradually slopes north from the channel to Kanessville Boulevard on the north. Reuse of this site, identified as a priority during the goal-setting phase of this planning process, can create a transformative feature for Downtown Council Bluffs and can reinforce the existing historic fabric of the 100 Block. Elements of this project include:
 - *“Canal Apartments” on the Vine Street block.* A centerpiece of this concept is a Vine Street Canal, a largely cosmetic channel that runs east and west between 1st and 2nd Streets. A smaller cross canal would extend north and south, connecting the project to the existing Broadway Passage. The canals, approximately 18 to 24-inches deep, are lined by walkways, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and street furniture, serving as both private amenities and public spaces. The canal system is also given scale by small bridges and crossings. The canals would be designed to “disappear” under its surrounding streets, much like the actual Indian Creek, using arches and similar design details. At the east end, the canal broadens into a larger pond with an aerating fountain, providing an especially attractive view from 1st Street. Water lends a special environmental quality that can make adjacent development particularly distinctive and, as a result, marketable.



A conceptual design of the promenade along Indian Creek.



A conceptual design of the Canal Apartments in the 100 Block.

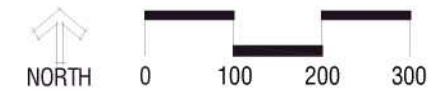


April 2003

100 Block

Council Bluffs Downtown

- 1 100 Block Adaptive Reuse and Façade Rehabilitation
- 2 Canal Apartments
- 3 Vine Street Canal
- 4 Pond and Fountain
- 5 Indian Creek Promenade
- 6 Indian Creek Channel
- 7 Pedestrian Bridge
- 8 Kanesville Greenway
- 9 Valley View - Indian Creek Connector Trail
- 10 First Street Pedestrian Overpass
- 11 Alley Redesign and Parking
- 12 Building Service Areas
- 13 Broadway Passage
- 14 Mid-block Pedestrian Crossing
- 15 Broadway Streetscape
- 16 Mixed Use Buildings
- 17 1st and Broadway Intersection Redesign
- 18 Parking Decks
- 19 Surface Parking and Building Service
- 20 Pierce Street Landscaping and Retaining Wall



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The two cross canals are lined by urban apartments. Because the site is currently designated as 100-year floodplain, the first residential level must be elevated. As a result, the concept proposes covered or structured parking at the canal level, with three floors of apartments or condominiums above. Driveways loop through the apartments and small surface lots, located between buildings and in some cases crossing the canals. The units are designed in an entryway configuration, with four units per floor surrounding each entryway landing. In a condominium setting, units may be combined to form larger apartments. The project yields up to 120 units, with an average size of about 1,200 square feet per apartment. In addition to the canal, the units enjoy excellent views of the bluffs to the north and south, and would provide a housing environment complete unique in the metropolitan area.

The Canal Apartments concept envisions complete clearance of the site. However, the design may be modified to preserve the L-shaped townhouses on the south side of Vine Street.

- *The Indian Creek Promenade.* For both feasibility and hydrologic reasons, the Vine Street Canal is a thematic amenity, and has no relationship to the Indian Creek channel. However, the creek is an important site feature, and links the 100 Block to the East Corridor. At some point, the deep channel may need to be rebuilt; however, this reconstruction is not part of the downtown plan. Instead, we recommend construction of a promenade along the south edge of the creek, connecting the Omni Business Center with the Frank Street entrance to the central district.

The Promenade is defined by a new retaining wall along the south edge of the channel. This would replace the deteriorating retaining walls, embankments, and even garages that now form the edge of the channel. Most construction is above the creektop – reconstruction to the base of the submerged channel is not anticipated as part of this project. The wall would be topped with a balustrade, designed in the style of the concrete newels that grace the WPA-era channel bridges that cross the creek.

A promenade walkway would be extended along the retaining wall, connecting into the canal walkway system. The promenade would feature lighting, benches, and other street furniture, and expand the public use of the redevelopment site. A pedestrian bridge over the Indian Creek channel, on the line of the north-south cross canal, would connect the Broadway Passage, Canal Apartments, and Indian Creek Promenade to the Kanesville Boulevard Greenway on the north side of the channel.

The promenade through the 100 Block leads to a pedestrian bridge over 1st Street. Grade changes at the 1st Street curve make it relatively easy to provide a grade separated crossing for the promenade over that major north-south street, leading to Harrison Street north of Kanesville. This provides a safe link between the Canal Apartments and a commercial opportunity site on the east side of 1st Street. This commercial development is discussed below in the review of the East Corridor concept.

- *Kanesville Greenway.* The green space between the Indian Creek channel and Kanesville Boulevard should be maintained and enhanced as a public open space. Major improvements should include a multi-use trail, part of the system envisioned by the metropolitan area trail plan. Trail links are considered in the CONNECTIONS section of this narrative. The trail would ultimately link the Valley View Trail and Wabash Trace with a future trail south along Indian Creek to the Western Historic Trails Center and Lake Manawa Trails.
- *Alley and Parking Improvements.* The Canal Apartment proposal incorporates an existing public parking lot. This parking would be replaced by a redesign of the existing alley. This alley would have a curving alignment, generally following the line of the rear walls of the 100 Block's buildings, and would provide parking on both sides of the alley drive. Gaps in the parking design would permit access to private parking and loading areas. The redesigned alley becomes a principal access to the Canal Apartments, and should be designed with the streetscape amenities proposed for the Broadway corridor itself. A major pedestrian crossing would be established, defined

by lighting and contrasting pavement, to connect the cross canal with the Broadway Passage and the north sidewalk along the street. Alley improvements should include underground electrical service.

- *Upgrade of the “Broadway Passage.”* The existing mid-block walkway between buildings will connect the cross canal and apartment project with the Broadway frontage. This passage should be improved, extending the lighting and street furniture proposed for Broadway to the north and into the canal network.
- *Mixed use redevelopment on the south side of Broadway.* The south side of the street includes larger, one and two-story commercial buildings, separated by surface parking lots. Most buildings on this block are either not historic or substantially modified. O’Malley’s Appliance is the anchor of the block, with a variety of other smaller retail, service, and civic uses. Pierce Street, the south edge of this site, is typically one level above Broadway’s grade. As a result, two story buildings on the block have upper level access from Pierce Street to the south. These upper levels are either vacant, or used for storage or automotive repair. Redevelopment of this block also emerged as a significant priority during this planning process.

The development concept takes advantage of the two-level character of this site and includes:

- Three 3-story mixed use buildings, with two levels of apartments over retail or office first levels. The buildings are sited along the West Broadway property line to mirror the pattern of the historic block across the street. Each building provides about 10,000 square feet of commercial space at street level, with 16 to 20 apartments on the two upper levels. A stairway connects the upper level apartments to Broadway; apartments are also accessed at grade from adjacent parking decks. Apartments have views to the historic 100 Block, the canal environment, and background hills to the north.
- Two parking decks, with two levels of parking, between the mixed use buildings. The garages have ground level access from Broadway for commercial and some residential uses; and upper

level access from Pierce Street for apartments. Upper-level stalls may also be sheltered or covered. This arrangement allows residents to park at grade and enter their units separate from the commercial Broadway environment. Each parking deck provides 50 stalls per level, together providing a total of 200 stalls. The parking deck facades are set back somewhat from the faces of mixed use buildings to provide better visibility of pedestrians and landscape opportunities along the garage.

Service access and additional surface parking if needed can be provided at Broadway level behind the mixed use buildings. A retaining wall would border these service areas between the parking decks. These lots provide a potential for an additional 90 stalls.

The façade architecture of the proposed project should reflect the historic nature of the 100 Block. The parking decks should employ banners, canopies, and other colorful features. The plan alternatively permits retention and restoration of the O’Malley’s Building. In this option, the existing building takes the place of the westernmost mixed use building and its adjacent parking deck.

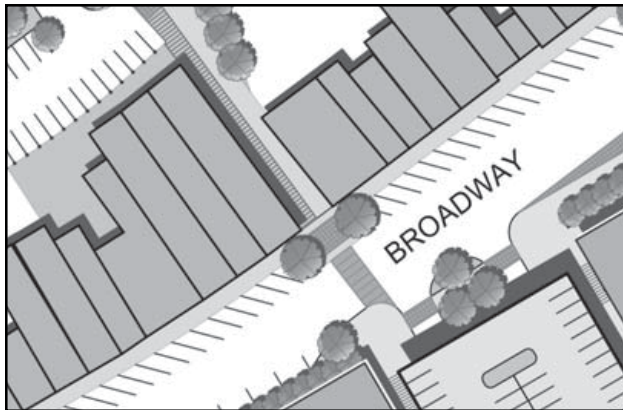
- *Redesign of the Broadway streetscape.* The streetscape design patterns established in the Downtown district should be extended into the 100 Block. The scale of this block is similar to the fine grain of the Pearl and Main Street corridors, and, as such, should reflect similar patterns. The Broadway streetscape should include:
 - New sidewalks and lighting along both sides of the street, using the pedestrian-scaled “teardrop” fixtures utilized along Main and Pearl Streets. Based on property owner preferences, a more traditional color for lights and other street furniture in this area should be selected. This will maintain a consistent vocabulary of features through Downtown, while expressing the individuality of the 100 Block. Sidewalks may also include a brick edge pattern.
 - Redesign of the 1st and Broadway intersection. The existing free right-turn lane would be removed, with right turns made instead from the curb lane of the reconstructed Broadway. The



Broadway today.



Mixed use redevelopment on the south side of Broadway. The south side of the street includes larger, one and two-story commercial buildings, separated by surface parking lots.



existing turn lane would be replaced by sidewalk and planter area that, along with the building line, emphasizes the view toward the steeple and façade of the historic Broadway Methodist Church. This change provides safer turn patterns and makes pedestrian crossings easier at 1st Street. Redevelopment can improve visibility problems at 1st and Pierce. This intersection may require modifications to improve both function and safety for pedestrians and motorists.

- A mid-block pedestrian crossing aligned to the Broadway Passage when warranted by public parking on the south side of Broadway. Special lighting, contrasting paving, and a crossing signal or required stop will link the features of the 100 Block Redevelopment Area together, and help new parking on the south side of the street serve businesses on the historic block.

- With completion of the south redevelopment block, reconsidering the need for diagonal parking on Broadway. The current diagonal parking on the north side of the street provides needed, convenient spaces for Broadway businesses. However, transportation officials are concerned about its safety through this two lane section. The parking components proposed by this concept add significantly to the parking inventory. When completed, Broadway may be able to revert to a three-lane section with parallel parking on each side, providing protected left turns into the two new parking decks to the south for westbound traffic. The mid-block crossing will be essential for parking on the south side to serve the north side properties adequately.

EAST CORRIDOR

The East Corridor is the primarily auto-oriented east extension of the central district. It contrasts with the “main street” setting of the 100 Block with buildings contemporary, free-standing buildings and individual parking lots. Yet, the East Corridor also represents the east entrance to the central district from the divergence of Broadway and Kanesville Boulevard; and connects Downtown to the hospital district east of Frank Street. In addition to free-standing commercial buildings, the corridor includes such significant civic sites as the Kanesville Tabernacle, interpreting the history of the Mormons in the Council Bluffs area; and the H. Lee Gendler Family Service Center at Broadway and Union. The Indian Creek channel runs along the south edge of Mercy Hospital’s campus, crosses under the triangle at the Broadway/ Kanesville divergence, and reappears, running west through the corridor subdistrict. The north side of the channel includes an office building and the Iowa Department of Human Services offices. Pierce Street parallels East Broadway one short block to the south. The Pierce Street frontage includes a mix of residential and commercial uses, some in converted houses.

Development objectives for the East Corridor include:

- Establishing the corridor as an east entrance to Downtown.
- Unifying the streetscape and appearance of this automobile-oriented corridor with other parts of the central district.
- Strengthening the connection between the core of the Downtown district and the Mercy and Jennie Edmundson Hospital campuses.
- Identifying opportunities for upgraded commercial development.
- Rationalizing and improving traffic patterns through the corridor.

The concept for the East Corridor includes the following elements:



East Corridor

East Corridor Streetscape

Council Bluffs Downtown

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- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 New Commercial Project | 11 Gateway Feature |
| 2 Indian Creek Channel | 12 Broadway Methodist/ Grace Church Parking |
| 3 Indian Creek Promenade | 13 Church Interpretive Pylon |
| 4 Tabernacle Pedestrian Bridge | 14 Parking Lot Landscaping |
| 5 Tabernacle North Parking | 15 Possible Future Redevelopment |
| 6 Promenade - Broadway Connection | 16 Franklin Avenue Parking |
| 7 Promenade Park | 17 Broadway/Franklin Redevelopment Site |
| 8 East Broadway Streetscape | 18 Defined Sidewalk |
| 9 Frank Street Open Space | 19 Valley View - Indian Creek Connector Trail |
| 10 Frank Street Crossing | 20 Broadway Traffic Reconfiguration |

- *Continuation of the streetscape program between 1st Street and Kimball Avenue.* The sidewalk in the East Corridor segment varies in width from seven feet near Frank Street to about twenty feet at 1st Street. As a result, sidewalk width in the new plan varies as well. The general pattern continues a 2- to 3-foot wide brick edge along the curb line, with a concrete sidewalk from 6 to 12 feet wide. Additional right-of-way behind the edge of the sidewalk is devoted to additional landscaping and tree plantings. The interpretive node concept utilized along Omni Business Center and along the West Triangle is also used along the East Corridor. These nodes include curved seating areas, a pylon with interpretive historical displays, and the pedestrian-scaled “teardrop” lights used throughout the central district. Ambient roadway lighting should be provided by higher, sharp cut-off fixtures, as used along Broadway west of Main Street. In common with the concept between Main and 2nd Street, contrasting pavement is used at driveways, maintaining the visual continuity of the sidewalk and separating the private and public domains.

On the south side of the street, private uses have encroached on the sidewalk between Frank and Nicholas Streets. This site should be re-planned to provide at least a six-foot minimum sidewalk here. A portion of the Nicholas Street right-of-way may be used to compensate for the parking stalls lost through reclamation of the sidewalk.

- *Extension of the Indian Creek Promenade to an East Gateway.* The promenade along the south side of the Indian Creek channel would continue through the East Corridor. After crossing over 1st Street, the promenade continues along a new retaining wall defining the south edge of the concrete channel. The promenade crosses Benton Street at grade and continues to the east. At the Kanesville Tabernacle, the promenade connects into the circular commemorative plaza. A new pedestrian bridge over the channel connects the promenade to the tabernacle’s parking area, replacing the elaborate system of ramps and stairs that now requires users of the north lot to cross at the depressed creektop level. East of Taco Bell, a landscaped and lighted walkway connects the promenade with the East



Broadway sidewalk. A similar connection would occur west of the Pizza Counter restaurant. The promenade continues to Frank Street, where an entrance and lighting feature defines its gateway. The promenade then crosses Frank and terminates at a Downtown Gateway feature in the East Triangle, discussed below.

- *East Triangle Improvement.* This feature is formed by the divergence of Kanesville Boulevard and East Broadway, and the intersecting Frank Street. Indian Creek runs under the triangle, which also includes a metal sculpture in the form of a world globe. We propose adding a more visible gateway feature, consistent with a community entrance program already established by the Iowa West Foundation. This feature acts as a terminus for the Indian Creek Promenade as well as an entrance to the central district.
- *Commercial redevelopment along 1st Street.* The block between 1st, Benton, Broadway, and Kanesville presents a commercial redevelopment opportunity. The site currently has office, service, and automotive uses along Broadway and a substantial amount of open land. The site can accommodate a 20,000 square foot commercial building (compared to about 15,000 square feet for the Walgreen’s at Frank and Broadway). Parking and the building would be oriented to 1st Street. A landscaped walk along the face of the building would connect the Indian Creek Promenade with the Broadway streetscape. Loading and service would occur off Benton Street; a pedestrian plaza could be developed as part of the Broadway streetscape.

- *Parking and street rationalization between Broadway and Pierce Street.* This short block is penetrated by frequent, short north-south streets, creating safety problems. In addition, these city streets break up potential joint use parking areas that could add to the parking inventory in the corridor. Opportunities for rationalization include:
 - Stutsman Street between Broadway Methodist and Grace Presbyterian Church. Closing Stutsman between Pierce and Broadway and developing a joint parking lot adds a substantial number of spaces and creates a functionally superior parking lot. An interpretive node can be developed that discusses the history of both congregations. Accesses to the lot from Broadway and Pierce should be offset to prevent the lot from use by cut-through traffic.
 - Franklin Avenue adjacent to Regal Lanes and the Catholic Charities office. This expands parking available to the bowling alley, Catholic Charities, and Midwest Sports. It could help relieve a dangerous backing movement of head-in parking into Midwest Sports, while expanding landscaped areas. It also helps eliminate a hazardous jog on Franklin north and south of Pierce Street.
 - Nicholas Street adjacent to Eddy's Convenience Store. This can replace parking that currently interrupts the sidewalk between Frank and Nicholas Streets.
- *Reconfiguration of the Broadway street section.* Broadway is currently striped for four lanes, while carrying traffic volumes well below the 20,000 vpd capacity of that configuration. In sections with frequent left turns, such as the East Corridor, a continuous center left-turn lane can increase safety and improve traffic flow. Depending on directional volumes, the city may consider an asymmetrical striping of East Broadway, with two westbound lanes (forcing a right turn from the curb lane at 1st Street), a center left turn lane, and one eastbound lane. This would be consistent with the ultimate development of three lane sections west of 1st Street.
- *Definition of potential redevelopment sites.* Outdated or obsolete land uses, or available sites may create significant opportunities for new development in the East Corridor. While this plan does not specify redevelopment, the city should nevertheless support desirable projects on these or other sites. Potential redevelopment sites include:
 - The Grace Presbyterian site, between Stutsman and Grace Streets, if Grace eventually moves from its current location.
 - The south block on Broadway between Grace and Franklin, now including Midwest Sports and four single-family houses, some of which are in marginal condition.
 - A parcel on the southwest corner of Broadway and Union, now including an apartment building, a small office, and a single-family housing.
 - The south block between Kimball and Nicholas, representing a natural extension of Jennie Edmundson Hospital and associated uses such as offices and medical services.
 - The north block between 1st and Benton, discussed above.
- *Continuing the trail connection through connecting Valley View and Indian Creek through Downtown Council Bluffs.* A probable trail route follows the north side of Broadway, either tight along the Indian Creek channel or through the Mercy Hospital campus. The trail connection would cross Frank and Kanesville, and continue along the south side of the highway past the Executive Center (formerly Cogley Clininc) office building and the Iowa Department of Human Services. Alternatively, the trail route could use the proposed Indian Creek Promenade from the East Triangle to the Kanesville Tabernacle, crossing over the pedestrian bridge to the tabernacle's north parking and connecting to the Kanesville Greenway west of 1st Street.



BAYLISS PARK

The Bayliss Park subdistrict, surrounding one of the region's premier open spaces, is generally intact, although some buildings surrounding the square have been demolished recently to provide expanded parking. The completion of the Union Pacific Railroad Museum in the historic Carnegie Library has provided the park with a new anchor. The Downtown streetscape program has extended through and into Bayliss Park and a new Veterans Memorial has been constructed along Pearl Street.

The *Nonpareil* has moved the former Redlands building at 6th Street and West Broadway. This raises questions about the possible reuse of this site on the square. One proposal has been to demolish the three buildings that make up the *Nonpareil* facility, providing an open space link between Bayliss Park and the Public Library.

This plan advises against this strategy. The quality of Bayliss Park depends on its urban edge, already degraded by the demolition of buildings on the south and west sides. Additionally, the library exposure to the park is its side elevation. A possible walkway link might be made south of the *Nonpareil* buildings, aligned with the entrance walk to the library between 4th and Main Streets. If the *Nonpareil* vacates the Pearl Street buildings, better options than permanent open space include:

- Reuse and redevelopment of the *Nonpareil* buildings. The Bayliss Park building is particularly critical to the subdistrict's fabric. The 1960s era façade should be removed and the building restored, whether or not the *Nonpareil* remains on the site.

- If reuse of the buildings is unfeasible, development of a new urban building with a strong façade along the park. A new building could be a mixed use structure, incorporating commercial, office, and even residential space. A building on the site should not exceed three stories.

Other recommendations for this district include:

- *Executing the master plan for the rehabilitation of Bayliss Park.* A top priority is the rehabilitation of the Bayliss Park fountain, the focus of the park. However, park improvements should respect the timeless integrity of this superb urban square and avoid trying to make it serve too many objectives.
- *Providing landscaping along the public parking lot south of the Fountain Square.*

GOVERNMENT CENTER

The Government Center subdistrict bridges the area between Bayliss Park and Haymarket. Primary needs revolve around additional parking for county government, with a proposal for a parking garage along Pearl Street between 5th and 6th Avenues. If built, a parking garage should:

- Be oriented north and south along Pearl Street (replacing the existing County Annex), and be designed in a style with details that are consistent with the buildings of the nearby Haymarket District.
- Provide after hours parking to support other uses in the Haymarket and Main Street areas.
- Be coupled with efforts to upgrade the county campus, including improving parking lot landscaping along Pearl Street.

HAYMARKET

The Haymarket District has undergone significant change and improvement during the last ten years. These changes have included the gradual rehabilitation and reuse of buildings for offices related to city and county government. Most recently, the completion of the Senior Center has added a major anchor in Haymarket, and the Downtown streetscape

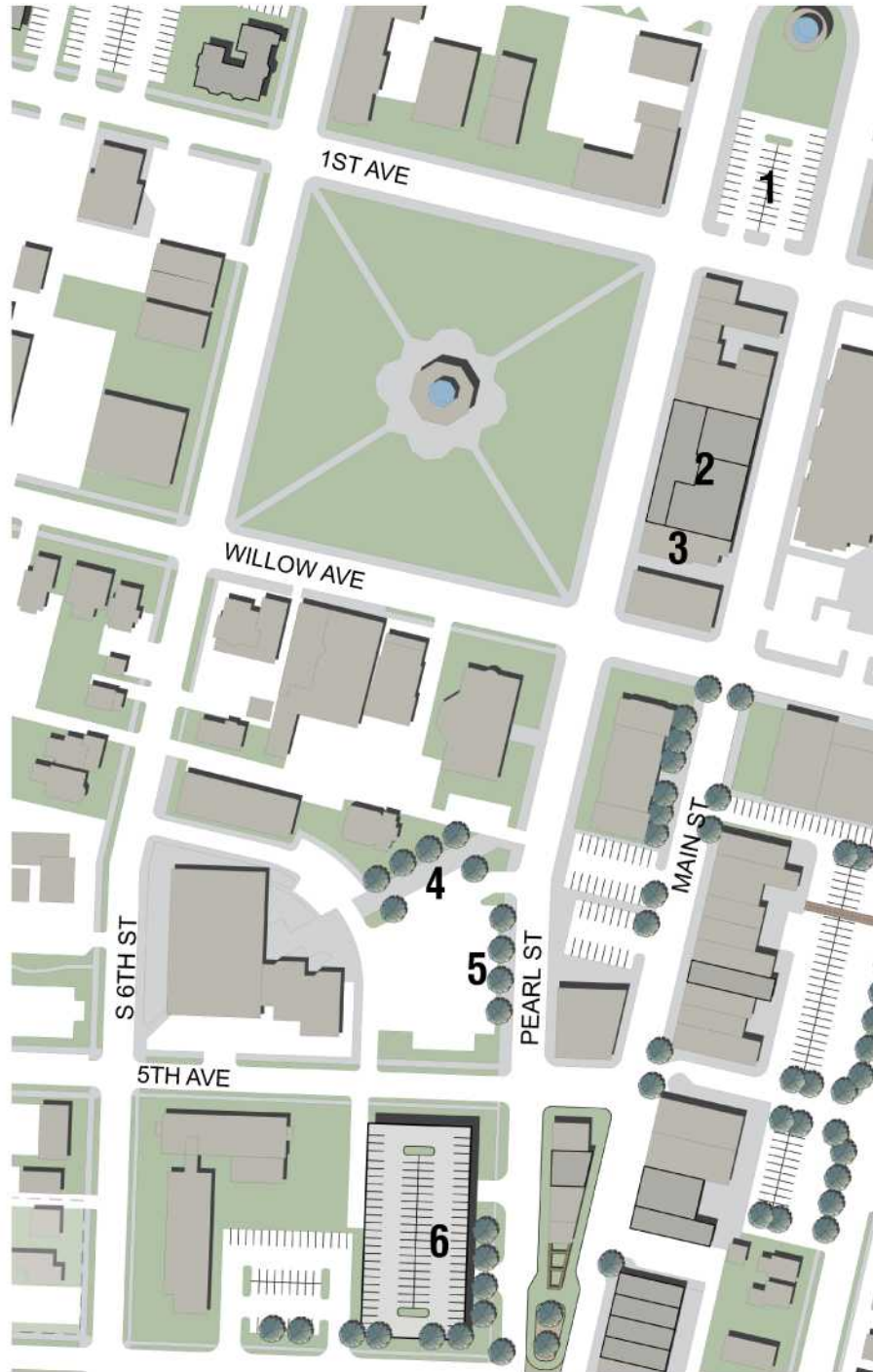
has been extended into the area. Future directions for Haymarket should:

- Continue current trends toward reuse of available small buildings in Haymarket.
- Incrementally improve parking serving the district.
- Identify and encourage redevelopment on vacant sites or on sites with deteriorated or underused structures.
- Use the new Senior Center as an anchor for significant new development focused on seniors, in turn providing a market for other types of services.
- Redevelop the most deteriorated part of Haymarket, along the south segment of Main Street.
- Completing development of a public environment that complements the scale of Haymarket's historic buildings.

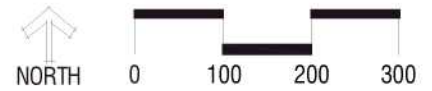
Elements of this program include:

- *Redevelopment of the block south of the Senior Center, between 8th and 9th Avenues.* This largely vacant site should be redeveloped with senior housing, taking advantage of the adjacent Senior Center. Previous planning for the South Main corridor by the City and Chamber of Commerce proposes a similar project. Closing one-block long 8th Avenue can provide a better connection between the Center and an apartment building, possibly linking the two facilities with a covered walkway. Parking for the apartments (as well as existing Center parking) would be accessed from South 6th Street to the west. The footprint illustrated in the plan support a three-story building with between 90 and 100 primarily one-bedroom units. Senior housing addresses a separate regional market that adds to the conventional housing market discussed earlier in this plan. The redevelopment project should also include a gateway treatment at the Main Street intersection, possibly using a landscaped median and monument sign to announce the entrance into the district.

- *9th Avenue and Main redevelopment.* The northeast corner of 9th Avenue and Main, the south entrance to both Haymarket and the central district, is severely deteriorated and represents an important redevelopment opportunity. The plan calls for clearance of about half the Main Street frontage of the 9th Avenue to Worth Street block, with office redevelopment oriented to 9th Avenue and Main Street. The footprint supports a single-story building of about 5,000 square feet, consistent with a potential for small, potentially owner-occupied office projects.
- The American Legion is adjacent to this redevelopment site on the east. A voluntary relocation by the American Legion, combined with acquisition of a house on the northwest corner of 9th Avenue and 4th Street, would approximately double the yield of this redevelopment site.
- *Worth and Main redevelopment.* A vacant service station on the northeast provides a 1/3 acre site for potential office or commercial development. This site requires environmental clean-up prior to development. It accommodates new office or commercial development with a footprint of 6,000 square feet per floor; available parking on site can support up to two floors.
- *Reuse and rehabilitation of opportunity buildings.* These buildings are substantial structures, contributing to the quality of the historic district, that are either vacant or have vacant upper levels. These structures lend themselves to commercial or office reuse at street level, and office or residential uses on upper levels. These opportunity buildings are primarily located on the east side of Main Street, and are typically small, two-story structures of historic or architectural note. Other potential opportunities include the two-story building on the northwest corner of 7th Avenue and Main; and a structure on the Haymarket "flatiron" between Main and Pearl south of 5th Avenue.
- *Reconfigured parking throughout the district.* With increasing office development, parking in the Haymarket District is at a premium. Parking is provided in on-street stalls, between buildings, and in a large public lot behind the Creston House.



- 1 Parking Lot Landscaping
- 2 Adaptive Reuse of Nonpareil Buildings
- 3 Possible Library - Park Connection
- 4 Walkway Definition
- 5 County Parking Lot Landscape
- 6 County Parking Structure



April 2003

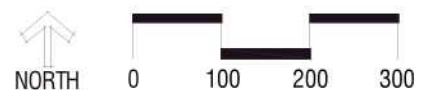
Bayliss Park/Government Center

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- 1 New Senior Residential
- 2 8th Avenue Closing/Connection
- 3 Expanded Parking
- 4 New Office
- 5 New Office
- 6 Reconfigured Alley Parking
- 7 Parking
- 8 Streetscape Planters
- 9 Flatiron Arbor
- 10 County Parking Structure
- 11 Haymarket Gateway
- 12 Redesigned Parking Lot
- 13 4th Street Landscaping



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Haymarket

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Methods to increase Haymarket's parking inventory include:

- Use of the north-south alley between Main and 4th Streets. While this alley is continuous between 5th and 9th Avenue, local access is more important than point-to-point continuity. Thus, the alley may be used or realigned to provide additional parking, as long as local access is maintained to buildings on each block. Areas of focus may include additional parking off the alley between Worth Street and 9th Avenue with a minor realignment; incorporating the throat of the alley at Worth Street into a parking lot serving both redevelopment on the northeast corner of Worth and Main and the adjacent Bingo Hall; and providing a south exit from the alley on the Worth-Story block through a new parking lot serving the Worth Street redevelopment site, along with additional parking off the alley south of Story Street.

- Redesign of the Kiel Building and Creston House lots along 4th Street. These largely linear lots are oriented in an east-west direction, relatively inefficient because of the number of drive aisles. These lots have no buffer landscaping along 4th Street, a particular problem because of the residential nature of the 4th Street blocks between Story and Willow. The plan recommends a north-south orientation for redesigned lots, with parking off the alley with an additional north-south parking module. Fifth Avenue can be incorporated into this expanded lot, potentially separating the residential Bluff Street neighborhood from commercial vehicular traffic while maintaining pedestrian circulation into Haymarket. This redesign provides a 10 to 12-

foot landscaped buffer along the 4th Street edge of the lot while still increasing overall parking on the site.

- Joint use of a county parking garage on the west side of Pearl Street. This garage is discussed in recommendations for the Government Center subdistrict.
- *A design feature at the Haymarket Flatiron.* The Downtown streetscape program has been extended into Haymarket, and will include installation of planters at the Flatiron intersection of Pearl and Main Streets. However, the demolition during late 2002 of an old service station at the point of the Flatiron has dramatically affected the scale of the intersection, and removed the enclosure that made it distinctive. The shape and scale of the Flatiron may be restored by either:
 - A new project, replacing the existing buildings with new development; or
 - Improvement of the south façade of the remaining building and filling out the point with an arbor or pergola. This could create a distinctive and relatively inexpensive public amenity that is more feasible than new development on this challenging site, and would complement the streetscape treatment of the rest of Haymarket.

WEST RESIDENTIAL SUBDISTRICT

This subdistrict includes blocks with mixed uses between 6th and 8th Streets from 1st to 9th Avenues. Primary civic and nonprofit uses include major churches, notably First Congregational on 1st Avenue



between 6th and 7th Streets; and First Presbyterian and St. John's, across the street from each other at 7th and Willow. Other public facilities include Bloomer School and the county youth detention center. The approaches of the South Expressway viaduct also affect the south edge of the neighborhood. Eighth Street between Willow and 5th Avenues has experienced extensive restoration activity of its historic Victorian houses.

While most of the recommended actions for the other subdistricts are project-oriented, policy directions are appropriate within this largely residential area. The overall goal of these recommendations is the conservation and reconstruction of this area as a revitalized urban residential neighborhood. Policies are determined based on an inspection of housing and property conditions and includes the following:

- **Redevelopment.** These parcels are either vacant or have structures that are deteriorated or may have unusually high rehabilitation or reuse costs. These areas should be assembled, cleared, and redeveloped for new uses. Typically, the desirable use for redevelopment parcels in this primarily residential district is infill urban housing, in small lot single-family or attached configurations. Potential redevelopment parcels in the West Residential Subdistrict include:
 - The south side of 1st Avenue between 7th and 8th Streets. This site is adjacent to the Ambassador Apartments and south of the existing Osco/Ace Hardware strip center. The redevelopment site may be expanded to include the Ambassador, which suffers from incipient structural deterioration and a lack of parking. One redevelopment option involves rehabilitation of the Ambassador, with construction of supporting parking to the east of the existing building; and office development, possibly serving nonprofit organizations, along the 1st Avenue frontage.
 - Two lots on 5th Avenue between 7th and 8th Streets. Infill urban housing, with two or three attached units is a desirable use on this site.
 - Much of the block between 5th and 6th Avenues from 6th to 7th Street. This large site is a transitional block that includes commercial and office uses. It is located at downtown end of the South



Expressway, with its best housing on the 6th Avenue frontage. Potential redevelopment uses might include governmental offices or other public facilities, private offices, or urban housing.

- A large part of the block between 6th and 7th Streets between 8th Street and the north-south alley. This provides a significant housing development opportunity to reinforce the 8th Street historic district and more modest but well-maintained houses in the south part of the district. Redevelopment of this site should feature restoration of the historic house at 7th Avenue and 8th Street; urban attached housing oriented to peripheral streets; and servicing and garage access in a courtyard arrangement off the north-south alley.
- A two-lot site on the southwest corner of 8th Avenue and 7th Street. This site is appropriately developed with new small lot single-family houses, to remain consistent with the balance of the neighborhood.
- **Rehabilitation.** Most of the residential buildings in these areas are relatively sound, but need significant rehabilitation. They represent good targets for rehabilitation financing incentives. In addition, current zoning regulations in these areas should be reviewed, to assure that zoning encourages rather than jeopardizes reinvestment in housing.
- **Conservation.** These areas feature basically sound housing with need for spot rehabilitation, code enforcement, and supporting public improvements to maintain neighborhood integrity.

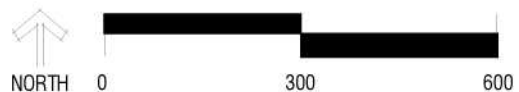


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West Residential

Council Bluffs Downtown

- Redevelopment:**
Acquisition, infill residential, office, and civic.
- Rehabilitation:**
Targets for rehabilitation.
- Conservation:**
Code enforcement, spot rehab, monitor.
- Historic:**
Historic district protections and conservation policies.
- Existing Civic Use**
- Existing Office Use**
- Buffering**
- R** Rehabilitation Site
- H** Historical
- R/H** Rehabilitation/Historical



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Street segments along 7th and 8th Avenues need curb reconstruction. Zoning classifications in conservation areas also should be reviewed to ensure that zoning protects investment and maintenance of the primarily single-family urban density housing that characterizes these areas. Conservation areas include the residential area between 7th and 9th Avenue from 7th to 8th Streets; and 7th Street south of Bloomer School to 6th Avenue.

- **Historic Conservation.** These special conservation districts include clusters of historically or architecturally significant structures, and conservation policies should be coupled with preservation-related incentives. These could include local landmark or National Register listing; historic signage and interpretation; and special targeted rehabilitation financing. Major structural alterations to buildings in these areas should respect the historical fabric of the surrounding block. Historic Conservation policy areas in the West Residential Subdistrict include Willow Avenue from 7th to 8th Streets; 8th Street from Willow to 5th Avenues; 6th Street north and south of Willow, and Willow to 7th Street; and 7th Street from 6th to 7th Avenues.

Other actions or policies appropriate for the West Residential Subdistrict include:

- **Open space development and walkways at the South Expressway approaches between 6th and 9th Avenues.** The transportation network developed as part of the CB-21 Plan proposed the possibility of bringing the South Expressway to grade at 9th Avenue. This would allow truck traffic bound for industrial areas south of 9th Avenue to gain direct access to destinations without affecting the central district. In addition, dropping the viaduct would make a 9th Avenue viaduct especially effective. Some residents of the surrounding neighborhood are concerned about the impact of surface traffic along 7th Street. These concerns can be addressed through substantial landscaping and boulevard design of the 6th and 7th Street one-way pair.

Even without major traffic pattern changes, this large open space should be improved to strengthen the surrounding neighborhood.



Additional landscaping should be provided between the expressway approaches and 6th and 7th Street; and a walkway should begin at 7th Street and 7th Avenue, continue south and under the expressway structure, and continue north along 6th Street to 7th Avenue. This provides more convenient access to the Senior Center from the neighborhoods west of 7th Street, and reduces the expressway's dividing effects.

- **Evaluation of current zoning classifications.** The policies identified for this area lead to a strengthened presence for moderate-density residential housing, including urban infill. Rehabilitation of existing houses is also encouraged. Zoning regulations that allow high-density housing, residential conversions, and non-residential uses by right can jeopardize the security of these desirable investments. Therefore, the city should evaluate current zoning to ensure that it is consistent with the overall neighborhood conservation and reconstruction policies for this subdistrict.

BLUFF STREET

This predominately residential district forms the eastern edge of the Downtown study area and encompasses the east side of 4th Street and both sides of Bluff Street between the landmark St. Peter's Church and 9th Avenue. Fourth Avenue includes the YMCA/Municipal Pool at its north end and a church and care home at its south end, with a mix of houses, some converted to multifamily use, in the intervening blocks. Bluff Street is principally a residential street, with some historic blocks. Larger-scale projects include the Monticello Apartments, a deteriorating,

low-income housing development between St. Peters and Willow Avenue; and the former Kirn Junior High building, now used as an indoor gym and an assembly hall, both at 5th Avenue and Bluff.

The policy framework appropriate for the West Residential area also applies to Bluff Street. Primary *redevelopment* areas in this subdistrict include:

- *A site south of the YMCA along the east side of 4th Street.* This site, also across the street from the Public Library, provides logical expansion space for the YMCA. Maintaining the YMCA in the center of the city remains a major priority. The 4th Street site is very limited by the bluff behind, but an ability to expand to the south could provide a needed expansion opportunity.
- *The Monticello Apartments.* This project has proven to be a blighting factor for the surrounding neighborhood because of a combination of apparent low occupancy and poor maintenance, along with its large scale. This plan recommends acquisition and demolition of the Monticello, and its replacement by an urban townhome development.
- *Worth Street south of the parking lot between 4th and Bluff.* Adjacency to Haymarket makes this an excellent site for medium-density urban housing.

Rehabilitation target focuses include:

- *Bluff Street north of Willow Avenue.* A rehabilitation target could reinforce momentum established by the redevelopment of the Monticello site.
- *The entire 4th Street corridor,* with the exception of areas identified for redevelopment.
- *Bluff Street between Worth and 9th Avenue.*

Historic Conservation policies are appropriate for the balance of Bluff Street, from the north side of the Willow Avenue intersection to Story Street. This area incorporates several historic houses and leads to the historic bluff district that includes the General Dodge House, one block to the east on 3rd Street.

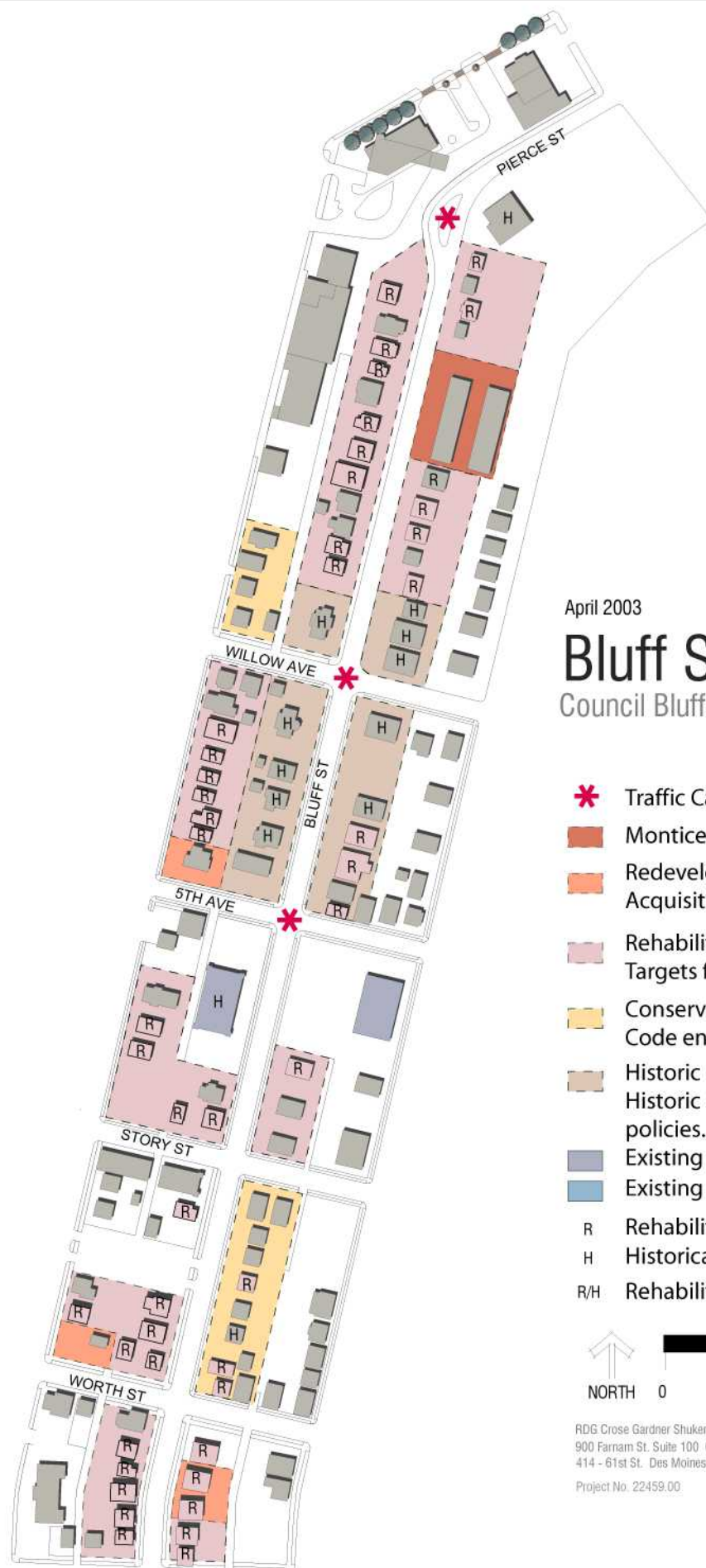


While housing and community development policies are vital to the integrity of the Bluff Street subdistrict, traffic volumes and speeds have proven to be an immediate and significant threat. Truck traffic bound for south industrial areas appears to be bypassing Broadway and Kanesville by utilizing Pierce and Bluff Street instead. These two streets also provide the most direct access to the bluff neighborhoods to the south and east. Because of Bluff Street's relatively open character, this traffic appears to move at speeds too high for a residential area. This situation abated substantially when construction at St. Peters during 2002 closed the curve connecting Pierce and Bluff Streets.

A traffic calming program along Bluff Street could address this problem without preventing the use of the street. Techniques to consider include four-way stops and "neck-downs" of the street at several intersections. Neck-downs or corner nodes do not decrease the actual width of the moving traffic channel, but have the effect of slowing traffic through intersections.

KANESVILLE NORTH/MYNSTER STREET

While outside of the central district, the Kanesville North site, extending from Kanesville Boulevard to Washington Avenue west to 8th Street, has been a site of considerable community discussion. It includes the Mynster Street housing corridor, which many observers consider to be a major concentration of poor housing and public safety problems. This site is also the location most capable of accommodating a major grocery store, a facility both important to the central



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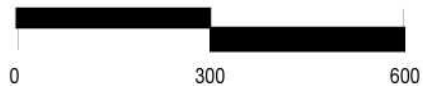
Bluff Street

Council Bluffs Downtown

- * Traffic Calming Feature
- Monticello Redevelopment
- Redevelopment: Acquisition, infill residential, office, and civic.
- Rehabilitation: Targets for rehabilitation.
- Conservation: Code enforcement, spot rehab, monitor.
- Historic Conservation: Historic district protections and conservation policies.
- Existing Civic Use
- Existing Office Use
- R Rehabilitation Site
- H Historical
- R/H Rehabilitation/Historical

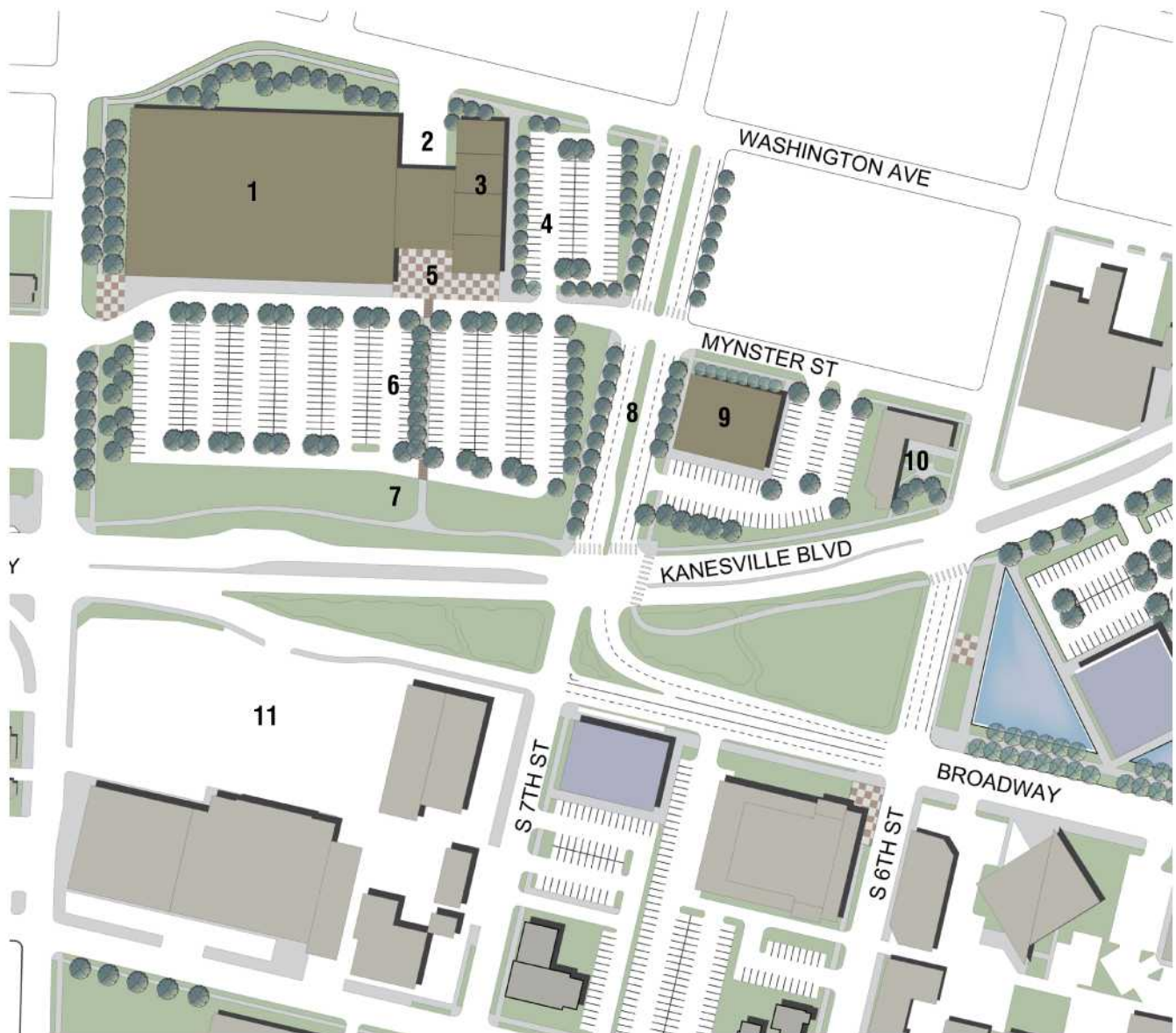


NORTH



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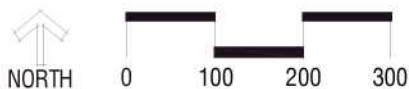
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Kanesville North

Council Bluffs Downtown



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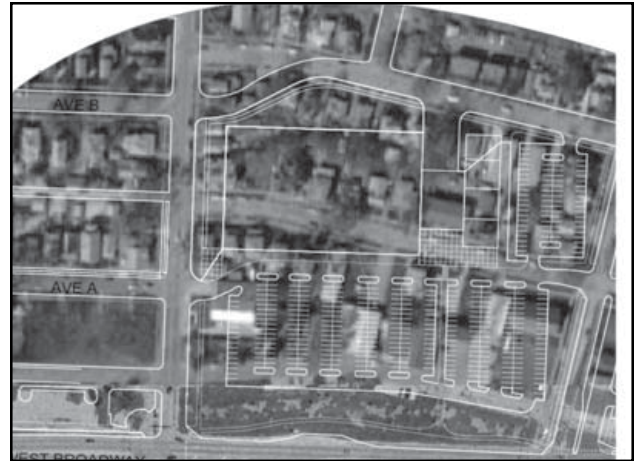
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- 1 Grocery
- 2 Loading Dock
- 3 Retail
- 4 Washington Avenue Link
- 5 Public Space
- 6 Pedestrian Link to Trail
- 7 Valley View - Indian Creek Connector Trail
- 8 7th Street "Boulevard"
- 9 New Commercial
- 10 Apartment Rehabilitation
- 11 Shopping Center Monitoring

district and supported by the market analysis presented in this plan.

This plan proposes assembly and redevelopment of the site between 7th, 8th, Kaneshville, and Washington for a major commercial development, anchored by a grocery store. The project accommodates a grocery store in the 70,000 to 80,000 square foot range, along with about 12,000 square feet of associated shops. The assemblage necessary to carry out this project requires significant housing relocation and demolition of substandard units. Other features of this project include:

- Aligning Washington Avenue into Avenue B and Mynster Street into Avenue A, eliminating awkward and unsafe jogs that now occur at 8th Street. Mynster becomes the principal east-west drive through the commercial project.
- Developing 7th Street as a two-way boulevard between Kaneshville and Washington. In the Avenue G viaduct scheme, 7th Street is a one-way southbound street. To improve local access, this plan's concept suggests taking Broadway's two westbound lanes to the Kaneshville intersection, and giving traffic the option of turning west on Broadway or continuing north on 7th Street to the new project. The two-way boulevard terminates at Washington Street, forcing the northbound movement to turn. This arrangement provides much better access to the 8th Street project and opens the site on the north side of Kaneshville between 6th and 7th to commercial development.
- Extending the Valley View-Indian Creek Trail Connector through the site along the creektop. The Indian Creektop would be incorporated as part of the project's parking and drive areas. The planned trail connection between Valley View and Indian Creek would continue between Kaneshville/Broadway and the creektop, and continue west to the Indian Creek corridor.



- Incorporating public space and pedestrian connections into the project design. The project design includes a connection from the trail into the shopping center, splitting two parking modules and creating a landscaped sidewalk. This connection terminates in a public "square" incorporated into the project design. The concept orients some retailing to 7th Street, served by a walk that connects the center to the neighborhood north of Washington Avenue. This design is developed to connect the north neighborhoods to the center and to keep the project from becoming a barrier to the residential area.

The east side of 7th Street also presents a redevelopment opportunity. The plan proposes a possible commercial building on this site, yielding about 12,000 square feet. Access is gained from the northbound lanes of 7th Street, and from Mynster Street. The apartment building at 6th and Kaneshville Boulevard is preserved.

CONNECTIONS

The subdistricts discussed above define strategic focuses for development activity and attention. Inherent in these recommendations is the concept of linkage. Indeed, the concept of the Downtown Council Bluffs Plan is as much about connecting and unifying distinctive subdistricts as it is about developing individual real estate projects.

Council Bluffs, through its streetscape program, has clearly expressed the value of linkage. This common vocabulary of lighting, sidewalk treatment, and street furniture has created an attractive street and pedestrian environment that has connected Haymarket, the Government Center, and the core of Downtown, culminating in the Fountain Square at Broadway and Main. This section of the vision plan summarizes some of the previous recommendations and builds on the city's foundation of streetscape linkages to develop a system of expanded linkages to help enliven downtown and connect its parts.

As with other parts of the Downtown plan, creating connections requires areas of focus – we simply cannot do everything. These connections are again designed to create activity and open up strategic opportunities for reinvestment. In some cases, opportunities for project development, such as residential adaptive reuse, are located along connecting routes.

Specific components of the CONNECTIONS system include:

- **CONNECTED STREETSCAPE**
- **INDIAN CREEK PROMENADE**
- **BROADWAY MODIFICATIONS**
- **OTHER STREET NETWORK CHANGES**
- **TRAIL AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS**
- **WAYFINDING**
- **TRANSIT CIRCULATOR**

CONNECTED STREETSCAPE

Council Bluffs has essentially completed the Downtown streetscape along Main and Pearl Streets from Broadway to 9th Avenue; through Bayliss Park; and along Broadway to 7th Street. The streetscape program should be continued east along Broadway to



Frank Street to link each of the major subdistricts. Order of priorities should be:

- *First Priority:* Broadway from Main to 2nd Street, including the Omni Business Center streetscape.
- *Second Priority:* 100 Block on West Broadway, from 2nd to 1st Street.
- *Third Priority:* East Corridor from 1st to Frank Street.
- *Fourth Priority:* East Triangle, at the Broadway/Kanesville divergence.

INDIAN CREEK PROMENADE

The Indian Creek Promenade supplements the Broadway streetscape by providing a quieter, backside connection from Omni Center at 2nd Street to the East Triangle at Frank Street. The Promenade features linkages back to Broadway at several locations. The edge of the Promenade is formed by a retaining wall along the channel, embellished with the details that were used on the original WPA-era bridges over the channel.

The first phase of the Promenade should be developed along with the Canal Apartments project in the 100 Block redevelopment area. A second phase would include pedestrian bridges over 1st Street and over the channel to the Kanesville Tabernacle's north parking lot, and would extend to the first walkway connection back to Broadway. A third phase continues the Promenade to its Frank Street terminus.

BROADWAY MODIFICATIONS

Some streetscape concepts are dependent on modifications to Broadway's traffic flow. These are designed to meet current and expected loads on



Broadway, while improving the quality of the pedestrian environment and calming traffic through the Broadway district. These modifications include:

- Transitioning from a four-lane section west of 4th Street to a three-lane section along Omni Business Center. This three-lane section also includes a bus turnout at Omni Business Center, and a right turn lane at 2nd Street for eastbound to southbound traffic.
- Maintaining the two lane section with north side diagonal parking on the 100 Block, at least until development on that block is complete. The additional off-street parking might permit reversion to a three-lane section with parallel parking. A protected pedestrian crossing at midblock, aligned with the Broadway Passage pass-through to the Canal Apartments and alley behind, is necessary for off-street parking on the south side of the street to serve north side businesses adequately.
- Replacement of the separated free right turn lane at 1st and Broadway with a conventional right turn lane as part of the street channel.

- Replacing the four-lane section east of 1st Street with a protected left-turn lane and the possibility of an asymmetrical section with two westbound lanes and one eastbound lane. The width of the street channel does not change.

OTHER STREET NETWORK CHANGES

Other street network changes identified by the development concepts include:

- Boulevarding of Main Street from Kanesville Boulevard to Broadway to provide a clearer entrance from Highway 6 into the Downtown core.
- Reducing local street connections between East Broadway and Pierce Street by incorporating some of these side streets into expanded parking lots. Candidate streets include Stutsman Street, Franklin Avenue, and Nicholas Street. In addition to providing more parking for adjacent uses, these changes will improve visibility and reduce points of conflict with Pierce Street traffic flow.
- As part of redevelopment at 8th and Kanesville, realigning Avenue B/Washington Avenue and Avenue A/Mynster Street. The Avenue B/ Washington realignment creates an inner circulator loop, as Washington aligns with Main at the Kanesville Boulevard intersection.
- Also as part of the Kanesville North Redevelopment Area, providing a two-way divided section on 7th Street between Kanesville Boulevard and Washington Avenue. This is established by continuing the westbound lanes of Broadway north to Kanesville (as at present), and continuing them as the northbound lanes of 7th Street. This greatly improves access to commercial redevelopment north of Kanesville.
- Closing 8th Avenue between Main and 6th Street, to permit uninterrupted pedestrian access between a new senior living building and the Senior Center.
- Installing traffic calming devices along Pierce Street/Bluff Street at the curve near St. Peters Church and at two intersections (possibly Willow and 5th Avenues) on Bluff Street.

- Considering the benefits of bringing the South Expressway viaduct to grade at 9th Avenue.

TRAIL AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

A major trail link is proposed in the metropolitan area trail network that connects the Valley View Trail with a future trail corridor along Indian Creek through Downtown Council Bluffs. The planned trail follows McPherson Avenue to Kanesville Boulevard (US Highway 6) at North Broadway and generally follows Kanesville to Indian Creek at the Broadway Skate Park. This trail also includes a spur along Mosquito Creek and College Road to Iowa Western Community College. A short portion of roadside trail has also been completed along Highway 6 west of the Highway 191 junction.

This trail link should enter the central district along the north side of Kanesville Boulevard, either paralleling the Indian Creek channel near Mercy Hospital and south of Mercy's parking garage, or along Mercy's access drive. The trail would cross Kanesville and Frank Street at that signalized intersection, and proceed westward on a widened sidewalk on the south side of Kanesville Boulevard. Alternatively, the trail routing could use the proposed Indian Creek Promenade, crossing over 1st Street, and continuing through the greenway between the channel and Kanesville Boulevard to 2nd Street. From here, the trail continues as a widened sidewalk trail on the north side of the Omni Business Center parking garage to Main Street. It continues through a landscaped area on the north side of the office development proposed at the West Gateway Triangle, and crosses Kanesville at 7th Street. It continues in a greenway between Kanesville and the creektop to 8th Street, and follows the creektop to Broadway Park.

The Main Street Boulevard should also include bike lanes to connect the Valley View-Indian Creek Connector to the core of Downtown. A designated share-the-road route should continue along Main and Pearl to Willow Avenue, east on Willow to Bluff Street, south on Bluff Street to 9th Avenue and east on 9th Avenue to 3rd Street/Harry Langdon Boulevard, a facility that already includes bicycle lanes in its design. The Harry Langdon bikeway connects with the Wabash Trace Nature Trail south of US Highway 275.



WAYFINDING AND ENTRANCE CORRIDORS

While local residents know their way around the central district, helping visitors find their way to and through Downtown Council Bluffs is important, making the district friendlier to users and marketing some of its features. Downtown Council Bluffs should design and install a comprehensive wayfinding graphics system to address these needs. Signs should be designed around a consistent and attractive graphic theme, and should replace a number of smaller, less coordinated signs. This system has several components that work at a number of different levels. These include:

- *A general Downtown trailblazer, used to direct visitors from major routes in and around the city to Downtown gateways.* This system should include a Downtown logo and direct people downtown from major community entrances, including interchanges at the South Expressway, Madison Avenue, and US 6; and the Interstate 480 bridge. Trailblazing graphics should use special elements that repeat along the major entrance corridors into Downtown: Madison Avenue/1st Street, US 6, West Broadway, and the South Expressway/6th and 7th Street pairs. With completion of the Avenue G and, ultimately, 9th Avenue viaducts, these corridors also become interstate to downtown links.
- *A Downtown Gateway sign at points of arrival into the district.* At this point, wayfinding graphics direct visitors to three or four major destinations that represent key districts that are points of orientation. Examples may be the Government Center, the 100 Block, Haymarket, and the City Center. These key destinations may be represented by both graphic icons and text. This

system may also incorporate directionals to secondary, more detailed destinations. These signs are oriented to motorists traveling at relatively slow speeds,

- *A series of signs, using the same vocabulary, directing visitors to key services, such as parking or information.*
- *A pedestrian sign program directing visitors to specific destinations, such as City Hall, the Library, the county courthouse, the YMCA, Omni Business Center, the Indian Creek Promenade, and so forth. These graphics may employ blade signs and should be designed as a special feature in downtown's pedestrian environment.*

The wayfinding system should pay special attention to the main entrance corridors into Downtown Council Bluffs.

TRANSIT CIRCULATOR

Downtown Council Bluffs enjoys reasonable public transportation service through its operating agreement with Metro Area Transit (MAT). Its Broadway/Mall of the Bluffs/Omaha trunk line passes through the district, while the Route 43/44 neighborhood loop terminates at 4th and Broadway. However, the relative size and diversity of the district may create a need for a local circulator service. This would be particularly useful to senior downtown residents, and could link them effectively with commercial, governmental, and medical services. A circulator is even more necessary if the array of features identified in this plan is ultimately developed.

As such, we propose that Council Bluffs consider a local circulator, much as MAT is implementing in Omaha. In common with the Omaha system, the central district circulator would utilize “retro-buses,” refitted vintage bus bodies, to cover the route. Many of the buses being used in Omaha are originally Council Bluffs City Lines bus bodies. The line would serve such features as the two hospital campuses, East Corridor commercial development, the 100 Block, Omni Center, the 8th and Broadway commercial development, Bayliss Park, city and county government, senior high rises, and the Senior Center, basically following the east-west and north-south spines of the district.

POLICIES

The previous elements of this plan establish the physical parameters of the Downtown Development Concept. This section addresses policy considerations for key issues and components of the plan. Principles of policy address the following general issue areas:

- **ADAPTIVE REUSE AND REHABILITATION FINANCING**
- **HOUSING**
- **RETAIL DEVELOPMENT**
- **PUBLIC SITE OWNERSHIP AND LAND ACQUISITION**
- **ZONING AND LAND USE POLICIES**
- **PARK IMPROVEMENTS**
- **PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND UTILITIES**
- **MAINTENANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

Some of these principles repeat concepts that we have discussed earlier. In these cases, we will simply restate the principle.

ADAPTIVE REUSE AND REHABILITATION FINANCING

Historic preservation and adaptive reuse are extremely important issues for Downtown Council Bluffs. Decisions over which buildings to keep and which to demolish can create controversy. Where one person sees an indispensable and irreplaceable resource, another person, equally committed to downtown and the community, may see a deteriorated hulk that is too expensive to rehabilitate and simply obstructs progress.

Yet, most stakeholders consider Council Bluffs historic buildings to be a distinct community asset. This has proven especially true on the historic 100 Block, recently listed on the National Register, and in the Haymarket District. Moreover, our analysis of building conditions indicates that, while some downtown buildings need rehabilitation, few buildings are so distressed that they cannot be rehabilitated. Therefore, we strongly recommend a policy that encourages adaptive reuse in strategic areas. Indeed, some of the most positively perceived anchors of Downtown, including the Bennett Building, the Creston House, and individual structures in Haymarket and

the 100 Block, are the impressive results of well-executed reuse projects. Elements of this policy follow.

- *Establish a production subsidy program to provide gap financing for major rehabilitation projects.* It is important to recognize that appropriate historic rehabilitation will not be economically feasible in most cases without assistance. This is because rent levels in older buildings in Council Bluffs are often too low to service debt on major development projects. In several situations, elements of a project that meet public development objectives, such as restoration of historic facades and reconstruction of rear facades, add costs that will not necessarily be recovered through higher rents. Examine two potential markets:

– **Office development.** Consider an upper level rehabilitation of a building for office space. Depending on the condition of the building, improvement costs of a gutted upper level may range from \$40 to \$70 per square foot. Table 6.1 below analyzes a potential reuse of a 5,000 square foot upper level space (excluding cost of building purchase). The rents calculated in this somewhat oversimplified example are by no means outlandish, ranging from about \$11 to \$15 per square foot gross. However, they are above rent levels in Downtown, particularly with large blocks of space coming into the market.

– **Housing.** Housing development costs are higher than office development in downtown settings because of the need for kitchens, bathrooms, and interior walls. Therefore, construction costs ranging from \$60 to \$80 per square foot are typical for housing development. Table 6.2 presents a parallel analysis on a per unit basis for a project that anticipates 900 square foot apartments for both scenarios. This analysis does not include calculation of potential tax credits.

While these are not excessively high rents, they are still above the market for upper-level housing in Council Bluffs, or the \$0.75 per square foot typical of the market. In considering economic feasibility, some form of production assistance becomes necessary, essentially to reduce the cost of debt service and to help finance front and rear facade improvements. Tax increment financing, and historic and low-income tax credits can help



Table 5.1: Rent Analysis for Upper Level Office Reuse in Council Bluffs: Adaptive Reuse Scenario

	Ex 1: \$40/SF Construction Cost	Ex 2: \$70/SF Construction Cost
Size	5,000 SF	5,000 SF
Estimated Construction Cost	\$200,000	\$350,000
10% Contingency	20,000	35,000
20% Soft Costs	44,000	77,000
Projected Project Cost	\$264,000	\$462,000
Owners Equity (20%)	52,800	92,400
Amount to Finance	\$211,200	\$369,400
Loan Terms	7%, 15 year	7%, 15 year
Projected Yearly Debt Service	22,780	39,843
Rent/SF Needed to Service Debt	4.55	7.97
Utility, Taxes, Maintenance Cost (per SF)	5.00	5.00
10% Return on Equity (per SF)	1.06	1.85
Projected Gross Rent/SF	10.61	14.82

Table 5.2: Rent Analysis for Upper Level Housing Reuse in Council Bluffs

	Ex 1: \$60/SF Construction Cost	Ex 2: \$80/SF Construction Cost
Size	900 SF	900 SF
Estimated Construction Cost/Unit	\$54,000	\$72,000
10% Contingency	5,400	7,200
20% Soft Costs	11,880	15,840
Projected Cost/Unit	\$71,280	\$95,040
Owners Equity (20%)	(14,256)	(19,008)
Amount to Finance	\$57,024	\$76,032
Loan Terms	7%, 20 year	7%, 20 year
Projected Monthly Debt Service	442	589
Utilities, Taxes, Insurance	125	150
8% Return on Equity (per unit)	95	127
Projected Rent/Unit	662	866



reduce this gap. However, to ensure feasibility and to finance extra facade improvement costs, we believe that a local financing pool is necessary to make the numbers work.

- *Identify target buildings.* The analysis in Chapter 3 relates the intensity of building use and historic significance to identify excellent targets for adaptive reuse. Excellent target buildings tend to concentrate in the 100 Block and Haymarket districts.
- *Utilize design standards.* Rehabilitation financed under this type of program in the 100 Block and Haymarket District should follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. Projects financed by the city through the Community Development Block Grant are already subject to these requirements.

HOUSING

Housing development is a fundamental element of the Downtown development program envisioned by this plan. Major housing initiatives identified include:

- 120 units in the Canal Apartments in the 100 Block redevelopment area.
- 54 units in the redevelopment of the south side of the 100 Block.
- Infill urban housing development at the Monticello site on Bluff Street and in the West Residential subdistrict.
- Upper level development in the 100 Block and in Haymarket.

Different combinations of incentives or programs will be required to accomplish each of these initiatives. Specifically:

- The Canal Apartments should be developable as unassisted market rate apartments or condominiums. However, the real estate project will not support the cost of land acquisition, site preparation, infrastructure, and the public environment. While TIF will be adequate to support some part of these costs, additional funding will be needed.
- Similarly, the mixed use redevelopment project on the south side of Broadway will require assistance for site acquisition, preparation, and parking garage construction. Again, project-specific TIF will fund a portion of these costs. However, additional redevelopment funds and other sources, such as parking revenue bonds, will be needed to complete the project.
- Infill urban housing will require site acquisition assistance and, depending on the nature of new development, mortgage assistance. The city may employ CDBG or HOME funds for these efforts, developed in combination with private contractors. Council Bluffs has administered a successful infill ownership program for a number of years.
- Adaptive reuse projects in the 100 Block and Haymarket may employ:
 - *Historic tax credits.* The historic tax credit provides a 20% investment tax credit against passive income for certified rehabilitation projects.
 - *Low Income Housing Tax Credits.* The federal LIHTC, administered through the Iowa Department of Economic Development, provides 4% and 9% for housing available to low-income families. The credit varies according to the percentage of units reserved for low-income occupancy.
 - *Tax Increment Financing.* The city may use TIF to leverage substantial rehabilitation efforts. In rehabilitation projects, the project's lender may write a separate TIF loan, paid back by the allocation of taxes. This avoids the added costs

and paperwork created by city issuance of a small bond issue.

- *Community Development Block Grants.* CDBG funds can be used to provide gap financing for projects that meet statutory requirements for the program. Program income from loan repayment ordinarily remains with the city, for use in other program eligible activities. HOME Investment Partnership funds can also be used to provide gap financing for affordable housing development.

- *New Community Tax Credits.* This program provides federal tax credits for infrastructure related to substantial new housing developments, and may apply to housing initiatives on the 100 Block.

- *Iowa West Foundation grants,* with capital derived from gaming revenues.

In addition to these, a locally-financed program should be instituted to encourage front facade restoration and rear facade improvements.

RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Retailing remains important to Downtown, and the market analysis suggests that it can play an expanded role in the central district. Major retail development policies include:

- Supporting major retail and neighborhood service development north of Kanesville Boulevard between 6th and 8th Streets. This is the site best able to accommodate a major grocery. Public side costs for this redevelopment will be substantial, including land acquisition, relocation, site preparation, and infrastructure improvements.
- Implementing a low cost retail education and consulting program through a downtown partnership. These consulting services should deal with such issues as marketing, window display, and merchandise presentation.
- Aggressively marketing and recruiting retailers in Downtown, matching needs with available space. Focus on areas of demonstrated strength for downtown and in-town retailing.



- Encouraging redevelopment on the south side of the 100 Block to expand retail space as the market evolves.

PUBLIC SITE ACQUISITION AND LAND OWNERSHIP

The City owns strategic lands that will eventually be needed for significant redevelopment projects, even if it seems to be in surplus today. These sites include the municipal parking lots north of the 100 Block and on the city center site southeast of Main and Kanesville. These parcels should be maintained in public ownership. The city or friendly agents (such as the Pottawattamie County Development Corporation) should attempt to acquire and inventory these sites in designated redevelopment areas as they become available.

ZONING AND LAND USE POLICY

Permissive zoning can short-circuit other policies that encourage residential preservation and reinvestment in areas like the West Residential and Bluff Street subdistricts. For example, if the zoning district permits high-density conversions of single-family houses, a prospective owner of a single-family house may feel less secure about such an investment. Therefore, the city should review zoning categories in all parts of the central district, to assure that zoning policy reflects city goals for the area.

In addition, approving agencies should discourage projects that are incompatible with the long-term development objectives of this plan. While some projects may seem expedient and promise short-term improvements, they should be avoided if they prevent a site from reaching its long-term potential. Therefore, individual development proposals in key redevelopment areas should be measured against their impact on the city's downtown development goals.

Part of zoning policy for Council Bluffs should include the fashioning of zoning classifications that reflect land use goals for Downtown and its various subdistricts. The C-4 zoning, originally fashioned for the Midlands Mall project during the 1970s, has mixed use characteristics, but is not fully appropriate for the central district. This classification should be redesigned as a true Downtown Mixed Use district, providing for design review and standards for new construction. Zoning in areas that are primarily residential should be reconsidered as well to encourage continued residential investment and generally to discourage conversion of houses to non-residential uses.

PARK IMPROVEMENT POLICIES

As Downtown develops with upgraded residential uses, parks and open spaces are important parts of the picture. However, the type of development anticipated in this plan requires large community open spaces near but not within the immediate Downtown area. Policies and focuses for parks to support residential growth downtown and reinvestment in surrounding neighborhoods include:

- Completing the Bayliss Park rehabilitation program identified in the city's parks plan, while respecting the simple and timeless character of the urban square.
- Creating excellent public spaces that permeate projects in the Downtown area. The canals and promenades of the Canal Apartments project provide such public spaces, with a focus on walking and passive recreation.
- Completing trail links through the district, including the connection of the Valley View Trail with the

proposed trail corridor along Indian Creek. This concept includes enhancement of the greenway along Kaneshville Boulevard and the completion of the Indian Creek Promenade.

- Implementing a multi-year rehabilitation and restoration program for Fairmount Park, a unique facility that in many ways is the community open space for the central district and surrounding neighborhoods.
- In the long-term, completing the open space development concept for the Central Railroad Corridor.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND UTILITIES

As a matter of policy, basic improvements to public facilities, streets, and other city investments should upgrade the district's visual environment. For example, street rehabilitation projects should include placing utilities underground and upgrading street lighting.

MAINTENANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Maintenance of the public environment is an issue in Downtown Council Bluffs and in most downtown districts. Nationally, maintenance beyond normal city standards, district promotion, and overall management is often funded by special districts typically funded by assessments. In Iowa, this mechanism is called a Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District, or SSMID. Ultimately, this is an issue that the district must address; however, at present, the district may be too diverse and separated to make creation of a SSMID feasible.

In the short term, however, we would recommend creation of a Downtown Partnership, with representation of all subdistricts. This can be an avenue for continued communication and may well be an extension of the Downtown Task Force that was involved in the process that developed this plan. A Downtown Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit developer with the ability and access to financing necessary to carry out key projects, may be a spin-off of such a Partnership.

